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THESE ARE MY JEWELS

BY

STANLEY WATERLOO

Author of "The Story of Ab," "A Man and
a Woman," etc.

CHICAGO
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.	
WHO WE ALL ARE.....	9
CHAPTER II.	
A DAY OF ADVENTURE.....	26
CHAPTER III.	
THE RED SWIPER.....	46
CHAPTER IV.	
A WHOLESOME NEW PRESENCE.....	59
CHAPTER V.	
A WONDERFUL NEW WORLD.....	77
CHAPTER VI.	
"IT IS I. BE NOT AFRAID.".....	89
CHAPTER VII.	
WORK, TRUST AND DON'T WORRY....	100
CHAPTER VIII.	
CONSCIENCE.....	117
CHAPTER IX.	
THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY.....	131
CHAPTER X.	
THE GREAT KOPJE FIGHT.....	146
CHAPTER XI.	
PRIDE GOES BEFORE A FALL.....	163
CHAPTER XII.	
THE TEST OF JIM.....	181
CHAPTER XIII.	
A BIT OF ROMANCE.....	197
CHAPTER XIV.	
PAIN.....	208
CHAPTER XV.	
A DAY IN FEBRUARY.....	223

“JUST AS THE TWIG IS BENT THE TREE’S
INCLINED.”

—Pope’s Essay on Man.

THESE ARE MY JEWELS

CHAPTER I

WHO WE ALL ARE

My name is Katherine Lawson and I am eleven years old. My brother, who calls me "Kit," is a year older than I. He is named James and often tries to be a good boy. I call him "Jim," just as he calls me "Kit." Of course we are well acquainted enough for that. My father's given name is Robert and my mother's name is Frances. They seem to me the best father and mother in the world, but I suppose other children think the same way of their own. I only know this, that we are an awfully happy family, even if Jim and I do have hard work in being really good. Jim says it is so easy to "fall down."

We live in a nice place, too. Merrivale is not a very big town, but it is pretty and the school is good and there are woods near by through which runs a creek where the boys go fishing or swimming, and where we have picnics sometimes. There is one big oak and beech wood where there are a great many birds and squirrels and where the ground is almost covered in spring with different kinds of flowers. Beyond this wood is a great swamp with tamarack trees and dark places where there is almost no sound in the daytime. There are farms and little groves all about and, when one climbs the hill anywhere out of town and looks around, the scene is very beautiful. Merrivale is certainly a good place to live in.

We live on Ray street, along the sidewalk of which are a great many shade trees, mostly maples and elms, and our house, which is close to the edge of town,

has a long piazza in front and a front garden and big back garden, and there is a barn where we keep two horses and one cow, which are tended by a hired man named Jake Heinrichs. He is a German who has not been in this country a great while and his talk sounds funny to us. Jim used to mimic him, but he doesn't any more. Jake is good natured and very useful.

The house just north of us belongs to the Duncans and they have three children of about our age, two boys and a girl. The boys are named Alexander and Malcom and the girl's name is Mary. I play with her a great deal. On the south side of our house is the one that belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Lane and they have three children, too, only they have two girls and a boy instead of two boys and a girl. The girls are named Ellen and Agnes and the boy's name is John. We play with them almost as much as

we do with the Duncan children. Back of our house, quite a way down, in what we call the "Flats," live some people with the funny name of Slann, and they have two boys, one younger and one older than our Jim. The older one is called Viggo and the other Max. They are not Americans and they are not quite like Germans, either. I think they must come from some place in Europe farther north than Germany is. Anyway, our boys have got into the habit of playing with them, so that you will often see the whole six together. Then there is a bigger boy who is sometimes with them whose name is John Peterson. The boys have nicknames for each other and John Peterson, because he had been reading about the war in Africa, said that the other boys must call him Johannesburg Pietersburg, which is a hard name to pronounce. That made trouble, in the end, but I will tell about

it later on. Of course there are lots of other boys and girls we know but these I have told about are the ones we mostly have around.

I don't know how to tell just what I wish about all we have done this summer—Jim and I, I mean—about how our papa and mamma wanted us to do some things, and how we got along. It is all clear enough in my mind but I cannot tell it very well. If I were older, maybe I could write it better. But I must do the best I can. I remember perfectly how it began.

Papa and mamma were sitting on the piazza after supper and Jim and I were sitting on the steps close to them, talking of something we were going to do after school next day. I saw papa looking at us thoughtfully a little while, and then he turned to mamma. I remember every word he said :

“Frances, don't you think the children

are old enough now to be taught a little more clearly and definitely what we would like them to know and feel? Don't you believe we can get them to understand, now, and practice a good deal of that which will make the kind of man and woman we hope to see some day? What do you think of it?"

Mamma thought for quite a time, and then she said :

"I believe you're right, Robert—only—you must remember that they are children yet. You may be disappointed, sometimes."

"That is true," said papa, "but I think they will understand. After all, there is nothing beyond the comprehension of even children of their age in what we want them to know. Their ordinary lessons in school are more difficult. I wish we had begun with them sooner, in the broader way, but we didn't know ourselves, did we?" and he laughed. I like

always to hear papa laugh. There is something about it that makes you feel good, and papa laughs a great deal. Mamma is a little graver, because she only smiles, and sometimes he calls her "The Deaconess," though she seems always to do what he says. But then papa seems to always do what she says, too, so they get along very well. They are fond of each other.

Mamma smiled and papa turned to us:

"Children, I'm going to help you go to another school besides the one you are attending now."

Jim looked scared. Jim is a pretty good scholar, though I think he might study more, but he isn't exactly fond of school. He says the only thing he really likes about it is recess. So, when papa said what he did, Jim rather "wilted," as he would say.

"Where's the school?" he asked.

"Everywhere," said papa.

Jim didn't ask any more and papa went on :

" You are pretty good children, I think, as children go, and certainly your mother and I care for you above all things in the world. We have tried to teach you in what we thought the best way, just as all fathers and mothers try to do what is best for their own. You have one of the best of mothers. You have been taught the difference between right and wrong; you go to church and Sunday school, and good people teach you, besides us. You have never disappointed us much. You're not a bad lot, you two," and papa laughed his dear laugh again, "but you're old enough now to learn something more, something that will affect what you do at all times. Your mother and I are learning it—I wish we had learned it earlier—and it has made us a great deal happier and, I hope, better than we were before. It has made this

world of ours more worth living in. We want you to enjoy it all with us. Do you think, just because you love us and because I know that you will enjoy it yourselves, that you can try?"

We both said we could, though I didn't understand, and Jim told me afterward that he was puzzled, too.

"All right," said papa, "we'll begin tonight. I'll not say another word to you, now, but I'll give you something to learn by heart," and then he went into the house. He came out in a little while with a sheet of paper which he gave to us.

"There are only some short texts upon it," said papa, "but I want you to learn them so thoroughly that you cannot possibly forget any one of them as long as you live. Do you think you can have it done by tomorrow evening?"

I looked at the paper and saw that the verses were all short ones, so I said I

was sure I could learn them all in the time he gave us, and Jim said he guessed he could, too. And that was all that happened that evening. These were the texts on the paper :

God is for me.—Ps. lvi, 9.

As thy days so shall thy strength be.—Deut. xxxiii, 25.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.—Prov. iii, 5.

Trust in Him at all times.—Ps. lxii, 8.

The Lord shall guide you continually.—Isa. lviii, 11.

I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou Lord only maketh me to dwell in safety.—Ps. iv, 8.

There shall no evil befall thee.—Ps. xci, 10.

The Lord is on my side ; I will not fear.—Ps. cxviii, 6.

Is there anything too hard for me?—John xxx, 27.

We studied pretty hard the next day, for we knew that papa was very much in earnest though he seemed to speak in a matter of course way to us. Papa and

mamma both believe in and try to practice what is called "The New Thought, or The Broader Thought, or The Science of Being." I don't think they have been interested in it more than two or three years; I guess before that time they were just like other people, but I do know that, somehow, the last two years have seemed the best and brightest I can remember around the house. Papa and mamma always look happy and papa's business is always prosperous and mamma is always well and smiling. I made up my mind, when papa spoke to mamma as he did on the piazza, that they were going to try to teach us the New Thought, too, and I knew the verses had something to do with it, so I studied as hard as I could and, by night, I had them all committed, though not quite "solid," as Jim calls it. Jim kept up with me until about three o'clock and was getting along pretty well until

the Duncan boys came along. Then he said he guessed an hour wouldn't matter and that he could make it up, and so went off with them. He didn't get back until nearly five and then, though he studied hard, he wasn't prepared when supper came. We went out on the piazza as usual and papa asked us how we had got along. Jim told papa that he had tried but was a little "shaky" yet, and begged for another day, and papa laughed a little and said, "All right."

Didn't we study the next day! Jim was at it before breakfast, and after that I kept saying my verses over again and Jim got his, too, and, in the afternoon, we kept saying them together until we couldn't either of us possibly forget them. They were just "plastered in," Jim said.

After supper we said we were all right and recited the verses to papa. He tried

us every way with them and said he was satisfied. Then he talked to us.

"My boy and girl," he said, "I don't suppose you quite know why I wanted you to learn those verses so that you would never forget them, but you will understand by and by. I want you to know and realize more than you have yet been taught, Who it is that you can always rely upon, and I want you to have those texts always in mind, so that you can repeat them to yourselves for your own relief and encouragement whenever you are in trouble or have the least doubt. There is no one we can always rely upon but God and we know that there is a God who is good and who is always caring for us. If there were no God, if there were no great Power doing it all, the world would not turn round, our hearts would not beat, the flowers would not open nor the birds sing. There would be no world or human

beings or flowers or birds. There would be nothing. Even you children can understand that there must be a Creator, somewhere, the One who made all these things and who gives life and feeling and understanding. He has given us the intelligence to know what His laws for our good are, and we know that if we only obey them and take advantage of them, we will prosper and be happy. We have intelligence, too, to know that He does nothing, creates nothing without a purpose. So we know that we shall live again after this world, since nothing exists without a purpose and even a thought is a thing. The very fact that we all want to live again means that we shall so live. If it were not so God would never have created the thought in us. Can you understand the meaning of what I am saying?"

We both said we could. I knew I did. I could even understand one of the rea-

sons why we shall live again after we die. It seemed all so simple and good.

Papa went on:

"You understand then why I wanted you to always have those texts in mind. There are many other texts, just as good, which will some day be a help to you. Well, with such a God, such a Friend always looking after us and caring for us if we ask Him, shouldn't we be all right, all the time? Shouldn't we just do our best, and then not be afraid of anything? Shouldn't we, if only because we are thankful, try to obey all His laws—and they are all simple ones and only for our good—and be glad over it? Your mother and I have been trying it and it has made everything wonderfully better for us. Will you try it with us? We will help you all we can. We don't expect you'll find everything easy at first."

Even Jim, who is a boy and doesn't listen to things as patiently as he should,

had got as interested as I in what papa was saying, and we both said we'd do our best.

"Well," papa said, "that is what I want you to begin to do, or, at least, begin trying to do. I want you to bear in mind two words, Belief and Courage. I want you to believe that God will always help you out, and so, whenever you are doubtful, even about small, annoying things, just repeat to yourselves any of the texts you have learned. He will care for you and you must not be afraid of anything in the world. You must fear nothing, not anyone, nor any danger to your bodies, nor anything unpleasant which may seem likely to happen. Just quote the text and say to yourselves that everything will come out all right. You'll find then that it will be all right, anyhow. We'll begin at once. I know that, in the end, both of you will succeed, and you mustn't be discouraged by anything that

happens at first. We'll help you—your mother and I — and don't forget the texts. Let me know how you get along."

And so papa and mamma had started us out on a way of living Jim and I had never thought much about before. We two had a long talk over it that night. We made up our minds that we would try hard, but we didn't see how we could help being afraid of some things. The next day was Saturday.

CHAPTER II.

A DAY OF ADVENTURE.

What a day! It was Saturday and Jim and the Duncan boys, Alexander and Malcom,—or rather Sandy and the Rat, as the boys call them—had planned to go down the creek fishing in the afternoon. Mary Duncan and I had begged to go along and they said we might. We started soon after dinner and in half an hour were at the creek at a place where the water is deep and where the boys have, generally, pretty good luck. There are sunfish in the pool-like places and, sometimes, the boys catch a black bass, and that is a great event for them. As for Mary and me, we knew we could find some late flowers, for it was only the first of June then, and, besides, we were going to play housekeeping for the

boys. Boys are hungry about all the time, and mamma gave us a whole lot of slices of ham to fry and Mary's mother gave us two loaves and some butter in a paper box and the boys already had hidden somewhere down the creek an old frying-pan without any handle, and we concluded we would have a banquet of fried ham sandwiches. We got to the creek about two o'clock.

The boys began fishing after they had found the frying-pan for us, and Mary and I began building a fire. It was made of short pieces of dead limbs and chunks of wood the creek had brought down in the spring, and we soon had it going nicely. Then we spent a long time scouring the inside of the frying-pan with sand until we got it as bright as could be. Afterward we went off among the bushes and into the fields after flowers and bright leaves, and found a lot of them. We were gone about two

hours and when we came back the boys, who had given up fishing and were hunting for clam-shells in the mud, said that they were all hungry enough to eat anything and wanted us to hurry with the banquet. The fire had burned down to a lot of coals by this time and we put on the frying-pan, with some butter in it, and began frying the ham at once. The boys sliced up the bread with their knives and made sandwiches as we passed out the ham. How they did eat! I don't know, but I think boys are more hollow than girls. Finally, they began to let down, or let up, a little—I don't know which is right—all but Jim, who had kindly promised not to quite fill himself at first but to wait and eat part of his lunch with me.

We cooked some more meat and Mary made a big sandwich for herself and there was left a great round slice of ham as big as a dinner plate which

looked awfully good. I was hungry, too. Just then Jim thought of something.

"I don't see how we are going to eat it," he declared. "We have been told never to eat meat with our fingers, and I am going to be obedient. I didn't think of it when I was eating with the boys."

Of course I couldn't be disobedient especially if Jim wasn't going to be. I think sisters should always set an example to their brothers, but what were we going to do! I had become so hungry that I almost cried. Then Jim had an invention.

"Don't worry, Kit", he shouted, "I'll show you! and he broke off a thin, straight piece of limb about two feet long and smoothed it and sharpened it at each end with his knife. One end of the sharpened stick he pushed down hard into a log which was partly rotten and, taking some newspaper, he seized

the big piece of ham and pushed it half way down on the pointed stick. There it stood, with the ham sticking out all round.

"We needn't touch it with our hands at all", Jim declared, "We'll sit on the log on each side and eat round it with our mouths alone without any help in getting it to us. Sail in!"

There was nothing else to do, so we sat on the log with some bread in our hands and craned down and bit off half-moon bites of ham, and so ate it all, first ham, then bread and so on. It seemed to me that I had never eaten any ham before which tasted so good. My nose got all shiny and the bending made my neck ache a little, but I had the thought that we were obedient youth, and that was a comfort to me.

It was just then that gloom came upon the hour. Who should come along but the Slann boys, and when Viggo, the big

one — he is fourteen years old — found what we had been doing and that all the bread and ham were gone he looked quite discontented and ugly. The boys went to fishing again and the Slann boys hung round. Max, the younger one who is a fat, solemn-looking boy with a large red head, climbed out to the middle of a big log which lay across the stream and nearly ten feet above it, and sat there with his bare feet hanging down. Viggo just idled around. By and by he began throwing stones into the stream, to frighten the fish away and only laughed at the boys when they complained. Finally he wandered off, and a little later, I saw him hitting at something in the grass and soon he came back holding a little dead garter-snake by the tail.

Then what happened was dreadful. I know that it is foolish and isn't right, because they are God's creatures, but I can hardly bear to even look at snakes,

and it always seemed to me that the touch of one would kill me. I screamed and ran when Viggo came toward me swinging the snake and threatening me with it, and that only made him worse. He yelled wildly and started running after me. I fairly flew into the field, away from the bushes, but there he was running close behind and laughing hoarsely. The dreadful creature caught up with me at last and threw the snake around my neck!

The cold horrid touch! I shrieked and turned faint as the thing fell off and then fell down myself on the grass. I was fainting I thought. I sat up but it was all I could do. I could only scream, and just then I saw Jim come running from the creek.

Jim didn't say a word but jumped at Viggo and hit him as hard as he could and in a moment they had hold of each other and were struggling hard, only to

go down together, with Viggo on top, for he is older and a great deal bigger than Jim. And then, holding Jim down there, Viggo began pounding him on the nose as hard as he could, while I could only keep screaming.

The next moment I heard shouting and, as I turned my head I saw the two Duncan boys come running and yelling, each with stones in his hands. Viggo heard them too, and jumped up and, as he did so, a stone hit him in the side and another went close by his head. He started running and Jim leaped to his feet and began running, too, and managed to hit him once more, as he got over the fence.

The boys came back panting and helped me up and we all went back to the creek. I helped Jim wash his face, but his nose kept on bleeding frightfully.

We all stood by the water, the boys

talking in much excitement, and all the while that strange younger Slann boy sat there on the middle of the log above the creek, never saying a word. Things quieted down a little, after a while, and I had about got over my faint feeling, when I saw Max start to get up from the log to follow his brother. He had hardly moved when I screamed again. The bark on the log was rotten and loose and, as Max moved a little, it began to turn just as a saddle does sometimes on a horse when the girth that goes round isn't drawn up tight enough. It turned backward and Max just turned backward with it. His heels shot up and his head, with his white face, went back; and downward he plunged like a frog into the deep water!

There was a great splash but for a moment there was nothing to be seen; then Max came up almost in front of us, gave one choking kind of scream and

went down again farther from us, for the stream was carrying him away.

The boys stood dazed for a second or two and then Jim—I shall always be proud of him for that—started running down the creek. There was a bend a little way below where the bottom was hard and pebbly and wide and the water very swift, but not so deep as it was where we were. At the broad bend it was not over Jim's head.

He got there ahead of Max and plunged into the water. And then, the next moment, Max came whirling by and Jim grabbed at him and caught him by the hair and so dragged him out upon the bank.

Max wasn't drowned enough yet to be senseless but he lay a little while coughing and gasping, and then began to yell. The boys pacified him as well as they could and, as soon as he was able to walk, Jim started with him for the

Slann place, an old shanty not far off, beside a road which ran down into the Flats and which we could see from where we were.

We four, the Duncan boys, Mary and I, waited and talked about all that had happened, half laughing and half crying, and I guess I was almost hysterical. Then we heard a yell away off, and looking toward the Slann Place, we saw Jim running away from the house with Mrs. Slann close after him! I don't suppose I'm as good a judge of running as a boy might be, but it seemed to me that Jim was doing himself a great deal of credit. Papa had often told us that when anyone did a thing he should do it with all his might, and Jim didn't appear to have forgotten a word of what papa had said. He was putting all his heart into it, and he soon left Mrs. Slann. She didn't follow him very far, and we scurried away to meet him, to learn

what was the matter! One side of Jim's face was very red and his coat was torn.

"What do you think!" he gasped, as soon as he got a little breath. "I took Max in at the door and the first thing he did was to yell out, 'He pulled my hair!' Mrs. Slann just looked once and saw his condition and then she jumped for me! She slapped my face and tore my coat and I don't know what she'd have done if I hadn't been a daisy—which I am—just a yellow daisy! I ducked and got away and dodged around the table with all the dishes on it. She rushed after me again and we slid and slipped and then—I don't know just how it happened—we tipped over the table and there was a smash and, I ducked out of the door and outran her! Golly!"

Oh, but we were mad! To think that Jim should have such a reward for saving a woman's boy from drowning! We didn't know what to say or do. The

Rat said he was sorry Jim had pulled Max out, and Sandy said he was going to lay for Viggo with more stones, but of course that wasn't a Christian spirit, though I almost wished I was a boy.

It was nearly six now, and we started for home. Jim's nose was bleeding again and we used up his handkerchief and mine and both the Duncan boys' and then had to use mullen leaves the rest of the way home. When mamma saw Jim she didn't say anything until she had taken him upstairs to be washed and get clean clothes. He came down looking all right except that his nose was as big as a grown man's.

Jim and I were anxious to talk to mamma about the ways of Providence. We had always heard they were mysterious, and now we believed it.

Here was Jim getting whipped for saving a boy's life, and that, too, by the ungrateful boy's mother! Jim called her

an unnatural parent, and I could not blame him. We started in to say a good deal but mamma said she thought we had better wait and that we would be wise to quiet down and forget our wrongs and disgusts for a little while. "Remember" she said, "that whatever has happened, everything will come right: 'No evil shall befall you.'"

You ought to have seen Jim's face with its swelled nose, as mamma repeated that text!

We cooled off and our wrath went down a little—dinner was extra nice that day—and papa smiled when he saw Jim eating chicken and gravy as usual, though his face was pretty red, and you could see he had been crying. Jim always cries when he is mad, but when he feels sorry he says he can't cry, but his Adam's apple just swells up and almost chokes him.

There are some drawbacks to being

a boy. One is Adam's apple and that choked-up feeling when you can't cry.

"Come," said papa at last, when we were all sitting out on the west porch looking at the sunset, "let us hear the day's adventures."

I went over and sat by papa and Jim leaned against the railing and told about the Slann boys and their mother—but he began at the end—and papa listened patiently until Jim got through. Then I told all about the snake and how the trouble began in the first place, and I could see mamma shudder, for she does not like snakes any more than I do.

Papa didn't say anything for a while after I got through talking, and his face was quite grave.

"You do seem to have had rather an exciting day of it," he said finally, "and I do not know that you have either of you done what I can disapprove of. As to Jim's attack on Viggo, it is true one

ought to be patient and endure a good deal when only he himself is concerned, but there come times when an endeavor to protect others is a duty. Viggo was doing what might have resulted in something very serious and Jim was right in doing the best he could. The fact that he got licked doesn't matter. There is no disgrace in being beaten at anything, if you have been fearless and have done your best. And, Jim, I'm very proud of you for saving Max. That was something worth while. The encounter in the house I'll warrant was a mistake of some sort. I do not believe that Mrs. ——"

And just then there was a clatter at the side steps of the porch and who should come almost tumbling up but Mrs. Slann herself! She looked dangerous, for she is a big woman, and her hair was flying every way and her eyes were shining and her face was red. Jim

was nearest to her and when he saw her his mouth flew open and staid that way. She didn't hesitate at all, but made a dive for him. Jim yelled and ducked and I screamed and papa and mamma rose to their feet.

Mrs. Slann stood still for a moment and then rushed up to mamma and broke out talking so excitedly and so fast and in such broken English that, at first, I couldn't understand her. Then she made another rush at Jim, and he went over the railing like a rabbit. She reached out her hands toward him and almost shrieked:

"Oh, my poor boy! How bad womans I was to lick you! — but I knew not you was saved my Max from the water!"

The tears ran down her cheeks, and mamma took her rough, red hand in her own white ones, and told the poor woman that she understood her.

Then Mrs. Slann told papa and mam-

ma all she had found out, how she had made Viggo tell the truth when he came home, and had got a new story from Max himself, and so learned all about everything. Then she turned to look once more at Jim, who had ventured on the porch again.

"Ach!" she cried, "Ach!" Hees poor nosel!" Then she brightened up. "But you should see the back of Viggo! Hees fader haf been mit him in the shed! And the foolish Max—I lam him well!" Then she made another grab at Jim and caught him, for he wasn't prepared, only listening to her with all his ears. She hugged him and kissed him and Jim twisted and squirmed and we laughed until we were almost choked and when at last she let him go Jim's face was redder than Mrs. Slann's.

When she had gone there wasn't very much left of our story to tell, but we confessed how we had doubted the ways

of Providence as we were coming home across the woods, so forlorn and beaten.

"I felt that God was for me," said Jim, "and I didn't feel afraid, either of Viggo or of the water, but I caved in a little when Mrs. Slann got after me!"

Papa laughed and gave me a hug, for I was close beside him, and mamma laughed, too, but I was still a little upset by the events of the day. It seemed to me I could feel that snake around my neck. Jim seemed to know it.

"Kit feels jarred yet," he whispered to mamma.

Then I tried to brighten up, and I told about eating the ham from the stick, and they laughed and mamma said that we must make allowance for circumstances in all things.

"When there are no forks, use your fingers", she advised and papa chimed in "when there is no bridge cross the stream as best you can."

And then as the stars came out we all quieted down, and papa asked us to remember the experiences of this day as showing that things are all right in the end, and he told us not to set ourselves up as judges, or as critics of Providence, for we had told of our questions and doubts.

"There is good in everything," said mamma, "in Viggo, in Max and in everyone you see. If you do your best, and love everyone and try to help them, all will come out right in the end."

When we had repeated our texts and said our prayers, and I was lying in my own bed I wondered if I had brought some of the troubles of the day upon us by being so afraid of the snake which Viggo Slann threw on me. I made up my mind to resist every fear and to try to be kind to Viggo when I saw him, but I thought it would be pretty hard to do either of these things.

CHAPTER III.

"THE RED SWIPER."

Nothing much happened for a week or two after this. Jim and I got along pretty well in trying to live in the new way, then vacation came and we had lots of time on our hands. Jim concluded to build a boat and sail the raging main on the creek, as he said, and he spent a lot of time digging it out of a little basswood log. He shaped it outside finely and set two masts in it and made sails and rigging, and at last all was ready for the launching where the creek spread out into a pond. The Lane and the Duncan children were to be with us, and Mary Duncan was to break a vial of currant shrub over the front of the ship on the festal occasion—which, Jim said, was to be "without par-

allel in the annals of navaldom." I guess he had read something like that somewhere, for it didn't sound like him.

"Most ships are called "she", but this ship was to be a man of war, the terror of the waves, and so Jim said it had to be a "he." His name was the "Red Swiper." The launching had been set for Friday afternoon and everything was ready, but, at breakfast that morning, Jim suddenly stopped eating and sat staring at me with a dreadful look upon his face. I was alarmed and asked him if he had swallowed something the wrong way, for it is a common thing with boys to try to get food down the wrong side of their throats and then they choke. It comes from eating too fast. But Jim was not choking.

"We can't have the launching today!" he said.

"Why not?" I cried.

"Why," he exclaimed excitedly, "it's

Friday! I hadn't thought of that. You can't launch a ship on Friday! It's not to be thought of!"

Jim looked perfectly used up over it and I was sad myself, both on his account and the disappointment to all of us.

"They'll all be flabbergasted when they hear that the launching is put off," he said.

I thought they would, too. We were all ready for a picnic after the ceremonies and I wondered what would become of the sandwiches and frosted cakes and tarts that mamma had made for us.

Of course I needn't have worried about the good things to eat, for there is never any trouble at a picnic about disposing of them. You just eat 'em, no matter what happens. But the whole thing seemed all flattened out, now that the unlucky Friday had bobbed up at the last minute. I looked at papa who had

heard what we were saying. He was smiling, though I thought he looked a little grave; then he spoke:

"I am disappointed in you, Jim."

"Why, sir," said Jim.

"Because you're old enough, and have been taught well enough, I think, not to be affected by any foolish superstition. You believe in God do you not?"

"Yes, papa," said Jim.

"Then if you believe in God, how can you believe that Friday or any other day can be unlucky?" and he went on:

"There is no such thing as a lucky or an unlucky day or thing, and there is nothing that you can do which is lucky or unlucky, in itself. All these beliefs are handed down from a superstitious and ignorant time and have become a sort of cowardly habit. To cling to such ideas shows that one has either an unreasoning or a weak mind. There are all the old silly things, like the belief of

the foolish that Friday is an unlucky day or that to spill salt, or break a mirror, or own an opal, or wear a certain ornament either promises or brings misfortune of some sort, or that to make a present of a knife or any sharp instrument to another will make trouble and 'cut friendship', as they call it, or that to find and keep a horseshoe, or to first see the moon over your right shoulder, will bring good fortune, instead. They are equally silly and equally wicked, for they imply a doubt in Him on whom we rely for all things. Nothing is more absurd and strange to me than to see really honest and good and even intelligent people, who worship God, sometimes victims of these superstitious fancies. How can any one believe in God and in such things, too? It is an insult to Him, and is profane. Does not He regulate all things? There are other beliefs just as wrong and ridiculous, yet

so common is this wicked weakness that many people make a living by preying upon it. There are those who even assume to foretell the future, to say what God will do. Some call themselves astrologers and talk about the bodies in the firmament, though they usually know little of astronomy. These people pretend to study the planets and 'cast a horoscope' for their dupes, and so reveal to them what is to come. There are the 'palmists', as they call themselves, who examine the lines in the palm of your hands and pretend from them to tell your character, and how long you will live and what is likely to happen to you. There are other sorts of fortune-tellers, such as the gypsies and their imitators in various ways. Well, remember this all your lives, that there is not a single one of these people, in all the world, who is not either an impostor or a fool. A few of

them may be deluded themselves, but that does not help matters any. All that is going to happen is to be through God's will and He has not given to any human being the slightest power to foretell what that is going to be, nor has he made it possible that this thing is 'lucky' or that 'unlucky'. He has given us laws, though, simple, generous laws, which will bring us good fortune if we obey them. Do not fear. Just trust in Him. The belief in good or bad luck or in the prophecies of wicked or foolish persons has wrought incalculable evil in the world, for the imaginations of hosts of people have been affected and they have doubted and suffered and been weak in consequence and, so, by their own course, have often brought upon themselves the very ills they have so dreaded. We do know that the mind affects the body, and that the mind lacking in hope and confidence is, in a way,

diseased. There is no excuse for that. Just laugh at all superstitions and all 'lucky' or 'unlucky' things. Just lean on Him and go ahead, in confidence, whatever happens. The one who has that faith and has no silly superstitions is calmer, happier and stronger than the weak and wicked people who believe in the slightest degree in signs and luck and fortune-telling. It is a commonplace way of explaining it to you, and using an expression which is almost like slang, but it may make it clearer to you, to say that it is God and God alone who is 'running things'. To believe anything else, or to act as if you believe anything else, is to doubt Him and commit a crime against Him."

Jim had been listening hard, and I saw his face gradually brighten as papa talked. When he got through Jim broke out:

"That's good, papa! That's helped me

lots! I'm not going to believe in such things after this. I'll just have faith and let 'er go."

"Then Jim turned to me: "The invitations won't be called back" he said. "The hour of three o'clock p. m., this afternoon, U. S. A., will see the great ship, Red Swiper, seek the water!"

"'The Red'—what?" asked papa, and Jim explained and papa laughed.

So the launching came off, after all, and the ceremonies were all right. Mary broke the bottle on the front end of the boat and called out "I christen thee 'Red Swiper'!" as the boys pushed the boat in off a plank, and it stood up and sailed beautifully. Being a war ship, it had quite a big toy cannon on board, such as the boys fire off on the Fourth of July. It was loaded, and they had several charges of powder more, in a paper down in a place boarded over with two shingles and which they called the hold.

They said war ships always had powder in the hold. They fixed what they called a slow match, which was made of the paper that sticks out of the end of the fire-crackers, and they fixed this to the big end of the cannon and lighted it just before the ship started. He had sailed about half way across the pond when the cannon went off, and there was a lot of smoke, and the ship rocked frightfully, but he didn't tip over, and the boys shouted.

"He's a staunch and powerful craft!" yelled Johnny Lane, who is smaller than the other boys and not so strong, but who reads almost everything he can get hold of and uses some awfully big words.

Jim went up the creek and across a long plank which had been laid for a bridge by somebody and brought the ship back in his arms and then we had lunch, which didn't take long, for the

boys ate as if they hadn't had anything to eat since Christmas. Jim went into the bushes to cut a longer stick with which to poke the ship farther away from shore when they started him again and then the boys played a trick on him.

Sandy took a little black flag from his pocket, which he had brought along on purpose, with a dreadful picture of a skull and two bones crossed underneath, and then they took off the Stars and Stripes and put the Black Flag on instead, and loaded the gun and fixed the match and pushed the boat off in a hurry, just as Jim came running back with the long stick he had cut. Sandy and the Rat gave three cheers for what they called the Pirate King, and Johnny Lane didn't do anything but lie down on the ground and kick up his heels and keep yelling, "Blood!" At first Jim came near getting angry but, at last, he took it good-naturedly and began to laugh with the rest.

The noble vessel sailed on finely until it got far out in the pond and then the wind got to be mild and he stood almost still. Then the gun went off and, almost the next instant, there was a great flash and a lot of smoke, and the shingle top of the hold rose away up in the air, and there were waves around the vessel and we could see it tossing all about in the midst of the smoke. Pretty soon the smoke went away and the waves died down, and there was the vessel standing up straight and all right, as if nothing had happened. Only we could see that the Black Flag had caught fire and burned away. Then the wind suddenly grew stronger and changed and the Red Swiper came sailing right toward us and up to the shore. Jim was in an ecstasy. "He wouldn't be a pirate!" he shouted. "You bet he wouldn't; and so he came sailing home to get the Stars and Stripes again!" and all the boys

cheered the ship once more and Johnny Lane declared that he was "a gallant craft, who seemed enbowed with almost human intelligence."

We sailed the Red Swiper several times again and Johnny Lane, who has learned "Casabianca" and spoken it at school, was wishing the boat was bigger so that they could put the Rat on board and set fire to it and then say, "The boy, O, where was he!" but the Rat didn't seem to like the idea, and Johnny said he hadn't got a hero spirit.

I don't remember ever having enjoyed an afternoon more. It was a splendid launching, even if it was on Friday, and we all went home contented.

That evening, after we got back, Jim went down town with the boys and when he came back he made me a present of a beautiful pair of little scissors I had wanted, and I didn't give him a penny to keep them from "cutting friendship," either!

CHAPTER IV.

A WHOLESOME NEW PRESENCE.

With vacation going right along, we children had a great deal of fun, for we were out on some expedition almost every day. To make things better still, Uncle Fred came. Uncle Fred Rathburne is mamma's brother, and one of the best uncles that ever lived. He is twenty-eight years old and he is a lawyer in the big city and papa says he is a good one. He is a bachelor and Jim and I think everything of him, for he joins in with us in every kind of fun. He is a straight, curly-haired man, very good looking, I think, and he laughs with his eyes as much as papa does with his mouth. He is fine.

When Uncle Fred was with us a year ago we children didn't see as much of

him as this time, because he was a good deal with Miss Louise Nesbit, the daughter of Colonel Nesbit, who lives at the other end of town. He was at her house very often in the evening and in the daytime they used to go out riding together all over the country. We couldn't very well blame Uncle Fred, even if we didn't see so much of him as in most years when he had been with us; for, certainly, Miss Nesbit is very dainty and pretty, though I think she is more dignified than most of the Merrivale young ladies. She has gray eyes and brown hair and is tall and stately, but she is as kind as she can be. I like her, and it seems a shame everything isn't right with her and Uncle Fred; they'd make such a splendid couple. I don't know what was the matter, for we thought they were engaged and that Uncle Fred and she would get married, but there must have been some awful tragedy, for,

a little while before Uncle Fred went away, he stopped going to see her and all seemed to be over between them. It is sad to ponder upon. Uncle Fred didn't look very well when he went away, but this year he seems better.

He came from the railroad station in a 'bus, in the afternoon, and we, mamma and I, ran down the steps to meet him. He kissed mamma and then caught me up in his arms with a shout and kissed me half a dozen times, which made me seem very undignified. For a girl soon to be twelve to be held like a baby and kissed on the street is absurd; but I didn't think of it, I was so glad, and I kissed him back, of course. Later, papa and Jim came and we had a jolly evening together. Jim and I told Uncle Fred about what we were trying to do in the New Thought and he was delighted and said he'd try to help us, for he thinks as papa and mamma do about such things,

though he is so full of spirits sometimes you would suppose he couldn't take anything in the world in earnest.

The next morning there was a time! Uncle Fred kissed mamma when she came down to breakfast and then turned to me, for I had just come down, too. I got behind a chair and told him, quite severely, that it was not proper for uncles, particularly one who didn't have gray hair, to kiss nieces as often as their fathers and mothers did, and he looked very much astonished. He said that there must be some new law, for he recollected most of the old law very well, because it had been put into poetry, and it recommended kissing, sometimes, even when the one wasn't your niece. "I'll show you just how part of it goes," he said, and then he suddenly sat down at the piano and began singing:

Beg your pardon, Miss Maloney, for the way
in which I've acted;

I am sorry, sorry, sorry, for appearing so dis-
tracted.

I've been simple as a loon,

I've been looking at the moon,

But I've come back to my senses; O, who
wouldn't do it, when

It is half-past kissing-time, and time to kiss
again!

Beg your pardon, Miss Maloney, but your
eyes are dazzling, quite so.

How I wonder, wonder, wonder, that I saw
another light so!

But I am no longer blind,

I'm returning to my mind.

I am glowing with a purpose; I'm the happiest
of men,

For it's half-past kissing-time, and time to kiss
again!

Beg your pardon, Miss Maloney, would you
have me getting haggard?

You were cruel, cruel, cruel, that you let me
be a laggard.

Just a word and then a pout

Would have served without a doubt,
And I wouldn't have been silly, like a hes-
itating hen,
When 'twas half-past kissing-time, and time
to kiss again!

Beg your pardon, Miss Maloney, It's myself
that I am kicking,
And I linger, linger, linger, though I hear
the clock a-ticking.
O, my fascinating friend,
It is ne'er too late to mend;
And I'm nearing, as I chatter like a bluejay
in the glen,
For it's half-past kissing-time, and time to kiss
again.

And then, after singing that astonish-
ing song, Uncle Fred caught and kissed
me and mamma laughed and told us to
come to breakfast, while I lectured him
on his impertinent familiarity. I think
"impertinent familiarity" is a pretty
good expression, but it didn't seem to
affect Uncle Fred any. He's nice.

But Uncle Fred isn't all that is going

on. Jim and I have been having trouble, though it hasn't been so awfully serious as it might be. It has been partly over our backs and partly over Jim's goat, Bildad—for Jim bought a goat lately from the Slann boys, who are quite decent now—but our backs were the worst. You see we are both growing dreadfully fast: it is just the age mamma says; and, somehow, we both got to stooping a little, when we walked or sat at table. Finally papa noticed it and said he wasn't going to have a round-shouldered boy or girl around his house. Some people might like that kind but he always preferred boys and girls straight up and down. Of course that was all in fun, but it did not take us long to find out that papa meant business. That night he said he wanted to talk on "backbones" after supper, and Jim said: "I hope we haven't got to be harnessed up like the Menier family. They are so

strapped and buckled that I should think they'd snap if they fell in climbing a fence, and they don't seem to laugh right, because the laughing place is getting new muscles." Papa just smiled.

When we were settled down after supper Jim was lying flat on his back on what he calls the "Prayer Rug—" for he's read how devout men in the far away East have special rugs for praying on, and declares he feels better on his than anywhere else and thinks better without knowing it. Mamma says those things do help by "association of ideas," and she always lets Jim bring out that rug when we are out for one of our talks for mamma does not think anything is too good for use. Papa began:

"I think I may tell you that mamma and I are more than satisfied with the progress you children are making in what we call New Thought, though that

term is misleading, for truth is never new, and this 'Broader Thought,' or 'Higher Thought,' or 'New Thought' is only old truths re-taught as Christ taught when he was upon earth—and is really 'Science of Life'—or 'Science of Being'—and now we'll begin on 'backbones':

"You find that breathing long deep regular breaths comes easy, now, do you not?"

We both said, "Yes."

"Remember always that your body is your engine, blackboard, or anything that you like to compare it to that can be controlled by thought or registered upon, and the braces I propose to put on you to straighten your backbones, are mental braces, with the most approved kind of buckles and straps in the way of words, that you ever thought of. They will prove so powerful that there will be no more chance of a crook or bend in the

spinal column, than there would be of a bluejay having rheumatism.

"In the morning, when you first awaken, get out of bed quickly, turn to the East, as a salutation to another day of good, we'll say;—that will impress the hour on you; stand like a West Pointer; that means, erect; inhale slowly with special thought directed to the perfect form of your backbone, or spinal column; see it straight upright, in your mind, a good pillar in the temple of the living God, your body, and then exhale slowly, with a thanksgiving, as well as you can think, that you are, in your real being, perfect, whole and complete. Do this ten times, morning and night, for the first week, turning to the West at night, not because the East or West will make any difference in your spiritual growth, but because you follow the earthly or physical sun, and by thinking of divine love as 'the sun of my world' you get

into sympathy with all that is high and good and perfect. Compare the physical world to the divine world, make them one, as they really are—you may get up your own symbols, if it will make things plainer to you—but be regular. Several times during the day, breathe long, and think straight. We will talk of this again in a week.

“Our bodies are temples not made with hands, and to us is given power to keep them perfect as they were made in the beginning, but we must do so quietly and in order, that no sound of the ‘hammer be heard in the land’. Make your own ideal,—that is, what you want to be,—high, then build up to it.

“You cannot build higher than your ideal, so make it high, beautiful, strong and good. You are the plant that your thoughts must water and nourish, and your body will tell by its growth and beauty if you have enriched the land

with good nourishment. Deep-breathing, right-thinking, temperate living, and, I will add, good-temper—though that is hardly necessary, since the first three will make the last a certainty—and you will find life a victory.”

Jim seemed to understand. When papa stopped talking, and no one spoke for awhile, then Jim said, “I believe I can ‘concentrate’, after this. I’ll just let Jim the First out and give Jim the Second a chance in his kingdom. I’ve got it!”

That was very fine language, for Jim. He’s funny, but he gave me the idea too, and we knew that papa and mamma were satisfied, their eyes looked so bright, yet so moist.

And so we began doing what papa had told us and, after a few days, or, maybe, it was two or three weeks, we found ourselves growing up straight, naturally. It made us think of the time when we were only seven and eight years old, when

papa taught us to swim, for he said that was what every boy and girl should certainly learn to do, not only on their own account but for the sake of others. We were pretty shaky at first, though it was summer and the water in the pond was warm, but papa taught us so gently, little by little, that we soon got over our fears and now, in my bathing suit, I don't care how deep the water is. Jim can swim with all his clothes on.

The deep-breathing was only fun and we began and kept it up without any trouble, only, pretty soon, it got to be such a habit that we didn't stop at twenty times a day but did it very often without thinking, and we do it yet. I know it is good for us. Jim's chest is quite a lot bigger round already.

It was Bildad, though, who furnished the most excitement. I don't know how Jim ever came to buy him, unless it is because he likes to trade. Jim had a lot

of things, a pair of skates, almost as good as new, which he didn't care for because he has got a better pair, and a fishing rod which joined together, and things like that, and Viggo Slann said he would let him have the goat for the things, and a dollar and twenty-five cents extra. Viggo said the goat was worth more but his mother had got a prejudice against him and would set the dog on him whenever he came near the house, and so they'd concluded to let him go cheap. "He's a peaceable goat," Viggo said, "and you needn't look out for him except when he bla-ats. He isn't afraid of anything but a dog."

Finally Jim concluded to make the trade, so he borrowed a dollar and a quarter from Uncle Fred without saying what he wanted it for, and gave the money and the things to Viggo and, between them, they brought the goat tied by a rope and turned him into the

pasture back of the barn, where he could have wholesome and invigorating food.

The goat was the biggest one I had ever seen, though he seemed awfully thin. He had little bits of horns which leaned back and his whole color was a kind of dirty black and white. His beard reached almost to the ground. Jim was going to name him "His Whiskers" at first, but finally changed to Bildad, which I think much better. Jim told papa and Uncle Fred about his trade but they didn't say much, even when Jim explained how useful the goat might be as company to Jake Heinrichs, about the barn.

For two or three days, Bildad didn't seem to do anything but eat. He nibbled at the grass and the hay in the barn and at the bushes and swelled out in the middle like a barrel. Then he began to show what Johnny Lane said was real animation. One evening, when Jake

Heinrichs was milking our cow—her name is Angeline—and I was looking on, Bildad came up playfully and began chewing at the tail of Jake's old coat and Jake gave him a rap on the nose. The goat went off a little way and stood shaking his head, as if he was thinking and disappointed over something. Then Bildad gave a bleat, but Jake paid no attention to him; and then he started on the jump, Jake not noticing, and, when Bildad struck him he somehow seemed to well up a little and then shot forth under the cow, and lay in the grass with the milk all over him. He jumped to his feet and chased Bildad with the milking-stool, but couldn't catch him. Jake Heinrichs said a great many loud words, and I am glad they were all in German.

Since that time, something has happened with Bildad almost every day. One afternoon little Jennie Maddern,

who lives a little way off, was crossing the pasture and Bildad chased her until she got on top of a big stump, and he kept her there until evening when Jake went after the cow. He ate a book Jim had left in the barn, and chewed some of the harness. Jim tried to lick him with a big switch and had to get over the fence himself. He says he will tame Bildad's proud spirit yet, but I have a presentiment something serious is going to happen.

And all this time Uncle Fred makes things pleasant for us. We are going into the woods and fields with him soon. He has not seen Miss Nesbit since they met in the road. I am sure of that, and, sometimes, he is very quiet, but he doesn't speak of her. He has made me learn his queer song and it is running in my head about half the time. It is either:

Beg your pardon, Miss Maloney,
or—

It's half-past kissing-time, and time to kiss
again.

CHAPTER V.

A WONDERFUL NEW WORLD.

The trip into the fields with Uncle Fred came off at last, and it seems to me that I shall never be the same girl again, I learned so much that morning. There is another world which I knew almost nothing about and yet I have been living all the time right in the middle of it. I must have been blind.

Uncle Fred told Jim and me that he wanted to introduce us to many of the best people in the world, whom we didn't seem to have ever met and, surely, he kept his word. We started out, just after an early breakfast, when the dew was yet on the grass, though the sun was shining brightly, and it was decided that the trip should be only along a path which winds through a big

field close to the woods and then back again the same way. The field is a sort of rude pasture which has never been thoroughly cleared yet, and there are hosts of bushes and thickets and stumps and the dry stubs of trees. In some places there is white clover in the clear spots and in others only short weeds. The bees were beginning to hum among the clover when we got into the field and the leaves of the bushes and the woods near by looked wonderfully bright and green in the early sunshine.

Uncle Fred said he wasn't going to tell us anything on our way across the field, but that we were to call attention to every living thing we saw. Of course we kept a sharp lookout.

It was Jim who saw something first, for he called out that there was a red-headed woodpecker on an old stub, as indeed there was. Then I saw a robin and a bluejay and Jim saw a hawk and

a crow, overhead, and the game got to be exciting. The path across the field was nearly a quarter of a mile long and when we reached the end we had seen eleven birds in all and I was one ahead. There was one bird whose name I couldn't tell, and Jim didn't know it, either, but Uncle Fred said it was a black-breasted bunting.

When we started to go back Uncle Fred said: "Now, I'll do the looking," and we had walked but a few yards when he stooped and pointed out in the bushes a slate-colored bird with a dark head; it soon made a noise almost like a cat's mewling, and then flew up into a little tree and began to sing beautifully. It was a catbird. This was only the beginning.

From a big open space, something called out, loud and sweet, what sounded like: "I see you! I see you!" and that was a meadow lark, and then, from a

green tree top came a note like a flute's, only richer, and there, amid the green leaves, was slipping about a beautiful orange and black thing, the Baltimore oriole. And so it went on; birds seemed everywhere, all because Uncle Fred had eyes to see.

The creek ran through the field and we stopped by it for a few minutes and he told us of the three kinds of what we had called black-birds. There were some running along close by the water and these, Uncle Fred said, were grackles. They were quite large birds of a purple and greenish black color. Then, out on a little island with bushes and cat-tails on it, was another kind, with a bright spot on its wings, and this was the red-winged blackbird. Back in the field we had seen a lot of rather brownish black-birds, on the ground, and these Uncle Fred said were cowbirds, and he told us why the other birds despised them. He

said the male cowbird was a polygamist, having any number of wives, while the ladies of his family had simply no character at all, as home-makers. The female doesn't make any nest, but, seeks out the nest of some smaller bird, and lays an egg or two in it. This means a tragedy, for the young cowbird, when hatched, is bigger than the other young in the nest, and gets most of the food brought by the parent birds, and so the other poor little young things often starve to death. In some parts of the country the cowbird is called "cow-catbird" or "cow-bunting". That word, bunting, is quite new to me, but it seems common in Bird-land.

So Uncle Fred went on, telling us things that opened our eyes, every minute. He said the Baltimore oriole was named that way because the colors, or livery, of an English nobleman named Lord Baltimore were orange and black

so the early settlers named the bird after him. Then Uncle Fred showed us a kingbird, or "bee-martin", as some people call it, and there is a bird worth while!

"He is great," said Uncle Fred. "He is the defender of the other birds. Let a hawk hover over the thicket, creating a panic among the feathered people, and note what the kingbird does. He doesn't hide as the others do. Not he. He flashes out—often accompanied by his mate,—and mounts upward, looking for the enemy. Away up in midair the marauder is found, and then ensues a preposterous combat. No hawk can catch one of those feathered electric sparks and the kingbird cannot kill, or even disable, the hawk. They flash about him, they pick at the top of his head; they alight between the wings and tug at the feathers; their keen bills pierce every exposed spot. The bird-

hunting monster seeks in vain to seize upon those little pieces of 'greased lightning,' and finally, in despair, abandons all thought of a meal in the locality they thus protect. That's your kingbird."

It was like a fairy story. Suddenly a large, dark bird flitted from close beside us and Uncle Fred stepped aside to a place where the ground was hard and gray, and showed us two great mottled eggs lying on the bare earth. They were the eggs of a whippoorwill, though the only nest was a smooth bit of earth. Maybe it was the husband of this same whippoorwill whose call we had heard so often at night. Before we had reached the beginning of the great pasture again, Uncle Fred had showed us quite a host of other birds. There were the yellow-hammer or "high-holder", as he is sometimes called, the phœbe, the killdee, the waxwing, or "cherry bird", the goldfinch—though we always call him the yellow-

bird or "wild canary",—a little snipe and a kingfisher, near the creek; when we crossed it again at the bend, a bluebird, swallows and purple martins, flying above us; a quail, which was whistling softly on a top rail of the fence, and four kinds of sparrows, the song sparrow, the vesper sparrow, the ground sparrow and the chipping sparrow. All these birds in one field, and Uncle Fred said we had not seen half those which were about us all the time in summer. We saw a red squirrel and a chipmunk, too, and a woodchuck, which dived into its hole in a sandy place in a clover field next the pasture.

Of each bird and animal, Uncle Fred told us the story, how each one lived and what its ways were, and of the strange and interesting things which happen in the lives of these people of outdoors. Somehow, then, and ever since that morning, I feel toward them

in a new way, and love them more. Jim had it about right, it seemed to me, when he said he felt as if he'd had a handkerchief tied over his eyes all his life when he was outdoors and that now he'd got it off, it was going to stay off.

We had much to talk about on our way back to the house and Uncle Fred promised to teach us how to see things. Before we reached home, he noticed an ants' nest and we watched the creatures awhile. He told us some strange things that I could not believe if I did not know that Uncle Fred never tells an untruth. There are tribes of ants, he said, which make war on other tribes, and take prisoners, and make slaves of them, to do all the work about the home of the conquerors, such as keeping the place clean and supplying their masters' young with food. The warlike tribes of ants actually keep cows, too, or what amounts to almost the same thing, for

they milk a kind of green insect which feeds on the leaves of plants and which gives a drop of sweet liquid, instead of milk. It was all wonderful.

"Most of the people in the world do not know what they are missing," said Uncle Fred, as we neared home. "They do not know what is going on around them. They fail to get acquainted with the birds, and four-footed animals, and all the little creatures, and so lose a great part of the happiness of life. To one who knows all about the life of the folk of the woods and fields there will come, throughout all his life, much unselfish pleasure. He has an advantage over others. He cannot walk in a garden, or along a roadway, or across a field without noting something which will delight him. It is like going to a theatre where are the finest performers in the world. There are weddings and deaths—comedies and tragedies—and all

the doings of a remarkable people. But he or she who would enjoy all this must learn to see. And the pleasure is of a kind to make anyone, a boy or a girl, a man or a woman, better of thought and happier in a host of ways. It is an ennobling pleasure, and is always at hand."

"I can't get over my being so blind," said Jim.

"I think many people go through life pretty dull of eyes and hearing to all around them," answered Uncle Fred, very thoughtfully. "We don't half appreciate the beings of our own kind, the people we live with, and see, every day. There are beauties of character among our friends that we fail to note. Unselfish, devoted lives are often lived to their end without any mark of notice or understanding except what must come from within. I think it is a pretty good thing to look for what is good and beau-

tiful among your companions at home or at school as well as among the birds and other creatures, for, your eyes, once opened to God's endless love and watchfulness, as shown to his children of every kind all over the world, and in all situations, can never be blind again to what will give endless happiness. It's a good world to live in."

CHAPTER VI.

"IT IS I. BE NOT AFRAID."

It had been a very hot day, and after dinner mamma and papa were sitting out on the piazza, when we all heard a roll of thunder far away to the west. Jim was sitting on the gate-post and I was rolling the croquet balls about on the lawn, when mamma called us to come to her.

"Sit here with us," she said. "We are watching the storm as it comes up."

I came up on the porch and looked to the west, where the sound had come from, and couldn't see anything except what was like a great heap of white wool in the sky; it seemed as if it was coming out of the green lines where the woods were, away off, and it kept piling up higher and higher. The air was

awfully close: it was as if you couldn't get enough of it to breathe, and everything was still. Even the bluejays were not making any noise, and the chickens were gathering under the barn. There wasn't a bit of breeze—the leaves of the cottonwood tree in the front yard were not moving—and everything felt, somehow, strange.

All the while, the heap of wool in the west kept rolling up higher and higher, until it became a great, white mountain in the sky, which almost overhung our heads, and then at the bottom, it suddenly began to get black, and the blackness grew until all the white clouds seemed to be drowned in it. There was a rumbling in the clouds all the time and it grew almost dark and then came a little breeze and then more until it grew into a great wind which screamed through the branches and filled the air with all sorts of flying things. After a

while, the wind went down a little, but not much, and then the rain began to fall in great drops which came thicker and faster every moment. Just then there came a great zig-zagging streak of lightning, running from the top to the big black cloud we were looking at, and all the darkness around it was lighted up. I hid my face against papa's shoulder

"Don't be afraid," said papa. "You'll soon learn to enjoy it all instead of being fearful. It is grand." I looked at Jim and he laughed at me. I could see his face, just over mamma's head.

"Fraidy cat!" said Jim.

"No," mamma answered, taking hold of Jim's hand, "Katherine isn't afraid, and I am sure none of us will be frightened by this splendid storm. Why, it is more beautiful than the Fourth of July fireworks you children enjoy so every year."

"Yosaphine is afraid,—she's drawing down the window-shades, and shutting the doors," Jim shouted, from the end of the porch, where he could see the kitchen windows.

Josephine Johnson is our cook, and she calls herself "Yosaphine Yohnson," because she is a Swede, and so Jim always calls her Yosaphine. I ran over to Jim, and, just as I leaned out to see the dark kitchen windows a big drop of rain struck my hair, and then came a blinding flash of lightning and a perfect crash of thunder. We both scuttled over to papa and mamma, and Jim got to them first.

"Oho!" I called out, "someone can run all right, even if he isn't a fraidy cat."

Papa laughed, and took us both, with mamma, into the library, for the rain was blowing in upon us. But we all sat by the window to watch the storm.

"Always remember," said papa, "that

the storm is not likely to harm you; that you must not fear it, because God is as much in the storm as he is in the sunshine."

Just then there came another dreadful crash.

"Mamma jumped at that," cried Jim.

"It was not because she was afraid," said papa. "You are likely to jump at any sudden noise, even when you know there is no danger. That is only the natural effect of any sudden shock to the nerves. It is merely physical. Your mother isn't frightened."

I could see that what papa said was true. Mamma smiled at us all, but said nothing, for the rain and wind and thunder were so loud we could scarcely hear each other.

"'Fear not, I am with thee!' That is a good thing to say when the storm strikes," and Jim and I repeated the words after papa, and he told us they

were God's words to all in times of trouble or danger.

There were more dreadful thunderclaps and great rolling peals, and the lightning kept darting and flashing all about—but I wasn't afraid any more, and I know I never shall be again. It was very beautiful to look at, as soon as the fear was gone. And, pretty soon, the rain began to get less and less and the clouds lighter and then the sun came out again, and the blue sky, and everything was glistening and fresh and one couldn't help feeling happy. Even the chickens came around their yard, cackling and clucking as if they understood it all, and, in an elm tree in the street, a robin was singing as if he had been left a fortune.

I think it must be that one kind of courage makes another, for when the storm was over and I had learned not to be afraid any more, I became all at once

brave about something else which had troubled me for a long time. I hadn't been afraid of anything real, but just of being laughed at, and I think that is about the hardest thing in the world to endure. Now, I thought that, if I wasn't afraid of a thunder-storm, I surely needn't be afraid of having any one make fun of me, and I acted as quickly as I could, so that I would not falter in my resolution.

I went upstairs into my room and from the lower drawer in the bureau I took Maybelle Louise and Lucretia Mott, and brought them down to the library. I sat down near mamma with one of the dear girls on each arm.

Maybelle Louise and Lucretia Mott are my dolls. I love them and I like to play with them, but Jim begun laughing at me some time ago as a great girl too big to be playing with dolls, and I had put them away, as I thought, forever.

Maybelle Louise is very pretty, with blue eyes and flaxen hair and a pink chiffon dress and hat. Lucretia Mott was given to me by a little girl who had tired of playing with her. She was dressed in a black gown, with a white shawl pinned across her shoulders, and she had on a cunning little white cap, like an old lady. When mamma first saw her she said, "Why, there's Lucretia Mott!" I liked that name, and as mamma said Lucretia Mott was a very good woman, I named my doll after her at once.

I had been very lonesome after my Maybelle and Lucretia were locked up in the bureau drawers, but I couldn't bear to have Jim making fun of me, so I contented myself with peeping in at the dear girls once or twice a day, and Jim thought I had forgotten all about them. Little did he know a fond mother's heart!

And now when I heard that I must

fear not even the thunder, I thought I must make a stand not to be scared away from Maybelle and Lucretia by Jim's ridicule and laughter.

Sure enough, the moment Jim saw the dolls in my arms he began to laugh. Papa was telling us that he thought we had behaved very well in the storm, and as he talked, he noticed Jim's laughing.

"Papa," I said, "I am going to play with my dolls, and not care for Jim's laughing at me. They are lonely for me, up there in the dark bureau drawer, and I miss them very much. You may laugh if you want to," I said, turning to Jim. "I am not afraid of being laughed at."

"Then you are a very brave young lady," said papa, kissing me. "It takes real courage to endure being laughed at, and often it becomes a duty to bear, for the sake of principle, all sorts of ridicule."

Jim came over then and stood close by

me. "Your'e all right, Kit!" was all he said, but it made me feel fine!

Then papa looked at Maybelle and Lucretia, and he told us how Lucretia Mott, for whom my doll was named, had been a brave woman, always working for what she thought was right, never fearing either laughter or blame from those who might oppose her. And, from that time, though Maybelle is much the prettiest, and poor Lucretia is far from being a beauty, I loved Lucretia best.

That night, when mamma was helping me as I went to undress for bed, I told her that it seemed to me we were always fighting fears of some kind, little or big. And she said that it was because men and women had for so many years and ages allowed themselves to be afraid of everything around them in God's beautiful world. "Fear has become a habit," she said; "it spoils life for thousands of people. We must all learn to deny every

thought of fear the moment it comes into our minds." And she taught me the beautiful twenty-third Psalm, beginning:

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," and ending: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

There came up another storm, but the thunder now only jarred and muttered a little, away off, and the rain pattered steadily overhead, making me so drowsy I could only say my prayers just in time to keep from being asleep at the Amen.

Maybelle and Lucretia Mott were tucked in beside me, and we all slept well.

CHAPTER VII.

WORK, TRUST, AND DON'T WORRY.

Uncle Fred has a way of saying things so that you never forget them.

One day, I remember, we were boiling the kettle—it was a tin pail—to make coffee for luncheon in the woods, for we do that very often now.

We kept piling bits of branches upon the fire and as we were hungry, we all stood looking at the pail to see the coffee boil. The sandwiches were laid out upon pieces of bark and the gingerbread and cheese, pickles and cookies looked as if they could hardly wait to be eaten. It seemed as if the coffee would never boil.

We had made the coffee regular camp fashion, under Uncle Fred's orders. We had brought a cup of freshly-ground coffee from home. This we put into the

tin pail, then filled the pail almost full of fresh spring water and set it on the fire. It was to come to a boil and be left to bubble as hard as it could for a minute or two. Then a splash of cold water must be thrown in to "settle" it, and we were promised something awfully good to drink with pure, thick, Jersey cream, and a lump of sugar or two for each tin cup.

"A watched pot never boils," said Uncle Fred.

"That's a proverb," said Johnny Lane. "What queer things proverbs are."

"There is wisdom in some of them," said Uncle Fred, "and this one about the 'watched pot' is certainly a hint in the right direction."

"Do you really believe there is anything in our eyes to keep the coffee from boiling," asked Mary, going over to where Uncle Fred was sitting on a log, waiting for luncheon.

"I don't know, some eyes might discourage the coals, they're so bright," said Uncle Fred, laughing.

"Oh, you are practicing speeches for young ladies," and Mary laughed, too.

We were all around Uncle Fred, now, forgetting all about the coffee, when he cried out:

"There! It's boiling over! Let the lid alone—it had to come up—the steam lifted it. Set the pail on the edge of the fire where it isn't so hot, and let it boil more gently for a minute. Now, dash in the cold water. There! The coffee is ready!"

We had a jolly luncheon and while we were sitting around after it, talking and laughing, Johnny Lane began again about the proverb Uncle Fred had used.

"And it was true, this time," I couldn't help saying. "The coffee wouldn't boil while we all stood around watching it, and, just as we forgot all about it, over

it came into the fire." "If you want me to tell you what I think is the inner meaning of that saying, I will," said Uncle Fred. "But it may sound a little like a sermon."

"Never mind, fire away!" Jim replied. Jim is sometimes just a little—but I am to remember not to find fault! Jim is an impulsive, warm-hearted boy.

"Simple people long ago made the proverbs or sayings we hear yet," went on Uncle Fred, "some of them have ceased to be quite apt, but all of them have a core of real meaning which can be found, by a little attention.

Take 'The watched pot never boils.' Who has not noticed how slowly the hands creep around the face of a clock, when you are waiting for a certain hour or minute? When your mind is eagerly fixed upon anything to come you say the time goes slow. Think of something else and the minutes fly as usual."

We all nodded at each other over this. We had everyone of us counted the slow minutes many times when we were waiting for something pleasant.

"It is different when there's trouble ahead," sighed John Peterson," then time goes like a horse running."

Uncle Fred laughed and said that John was a dismal philosopher. And he quoted something from Shakspeare, almost like John's remark. Then he grew very serious, and we all edged as close to him as we could, for we could see by his look that he had something very important to say to us.

"There is a deep meaning to be got into the old saying, if not out of it. If you will listen very thoughtfully I will tell you what I mean."

We all promised to listen, hard, and so he went on.

"When you are doing anything, concentrate your mind upon your work or

your play, but when you are through, when you have done all you can for the time, stop thinking about it, and do not worry over the part some one else must do. And don't fix your thoughts on something or somebody in fear that they will go wrong. In short, do your own work, do it well, and don't worry. Don't be afraid your fire is going to go out, or that the kettle you have set over it is going to get cold instead of hot.

"If you have laid the fire properly, and put the kettle on right, with the thing you want cooked in the kettle, you have done your part. The forces of nature,—or God, rather let us say,—will do the rest.

"The teachers of New Thought have very important things to say along this line. We believe that when our minds become burdened over what are called cares and troubles, we should resolutely turn our thoughts away from the dis-

turbing subject and fix them upon something calming, beautiful and good.

"The forces of God work for good at all times. What is best, what is right, is going to happen without our overlooking and trying to 'boss' things. If you think of beautiful, restful things, trusting in the wisdom and goodness of God, having first done all that is due from you, what you have worked and hoped for will appear."

"Sometimes," said Sandy very soberly, "we worry a lot over some one else's affair, and then we get other people to fretting, and those who are trying to do something get harried so that they can't work well."

Uncle Fred liked that. I guess he hadn't expected it from Sandy.

"I have heard of children who planted some garden seeds," said he, laying his hand upon Sandy's shoulder, "and the next day the children were so anxious

to see whether the plants were growing that they dug up the seeds to look at them. Every day they turned up the soil and held the poor seeds in their hands, and looked them over. Then they stuck them back into the ground for a few hours. The seeds never sprouted, and the garden they wanted to have became a patch of weeds."

"Look at that navy blue bird up there!" cried Agnes Lane, suddenly, pointing at a beech branch right over our heads.

O, such a tiny bird it was, and so queerly blue!

"It is an indigo bird," said Uncle Fred very softly. "I wish he would sing. From the way he acts I believe he has a nest near by."

"Isn't he a beauty!" exclaimed Ellen. "How sweet he would look on a black velvet hat!"

"Oh, Ellen," said Mary, "I didn't think you could say that! I think the bird is

beautiful as it is now, but I should hate to see the poor dead thing on a hat."

Ellen flushed very red, but said nothing. Uncle Fred looked at her kindly.

"Ellen spoke thoughtlessly," said he, "but she commands her tongue very well now, I am sure. It is hard to be rebuked isn't it?"

Ellen's eyes filled with tears.

"I was only thinking how lovely the bird was, and wishing I could see him every day," said Mary.

"Somewhere near here, in a small tree or shrub, perhaps in that thicket over there," said Uncle Fred, "is a nest, a beautiful little nest, full of young indigo birds. That one we just saw is the young birds' father, and their mother I noticed too, a moment ago. They are out foraging for their young ones. If they should be killed what would become of the nest full of young birds?"

"They would slowly starve to death," answered Jim.

"They would die, neglected and miserable, perhaps, because some boy or man had killed the parent birds for cruel pleasure, or for profit. The plumage of birds is at its best when their nestlings are young and dependent upon them for food. So at that time the pretty things are a mark for hunters of beautiful plumage for ladies' hats. It is hard to imagine more misery than the death of these little blue things would cause. That is why no one who has once thought about it can bear to wear, as an ornament, the wings, or breast, or head, or body of any wild bird."

"Why do the laws except the feathers of game and domestic birds?" I asked, and felt rather fine in showing that I remembered what I had heard someone say.

"Because the young of such birds are

protected. During the nesting season no game birds can be killed," was Uncle Fred's answer.

"Well," said Jim, "I don't like feathers of any kind on a girl's hat. I like chicken, but not chicken feathers, unless they are stuffed into pillows."

Mamma never wears feathers and she has taught Jim and me not to help in any way to lessen the numbers of wild birds; for we love them.

The little indigo bird hopped about, as if it knew we wouldn't hurt it, and at last raised a song so sweet and so loud that we were all enchanted.

From birds, Uncle Fred got to talking about animals, wild and domestic. It was this day that Uncle Fred told us the story of Bark, a curly little dog that saved its master's life when he went to be a soldier.

Uncle Fred is very fond of dogs, and all kinds of animals, and he had been

telling us how bad it was to tease and plague a dog. He says their feelings are easily hurt, and that their love and devotion deserve a better return than most people give.

"Anyone who will keep a dog, a cat or bird and not feed it and love it, and see that it does not pine away in loneliness, is not fit to own any sort of a pet," he said. But I must tell about Bark.

In the very first part of the great war between the states there was a farmer's boy in Wisconsin who enlisted for three months in the Fourth Wisconsin regiment, and when he left home he took his pet dog, a curly little fellow named Bark, with him, and it was allowed to run about the camps, for military rules were not very strict at first.

Amos Steer was the boy's name. In the very first fight he was in he was sent with others a little away from his regiment into a thicket, for he was a

great shot, and had a sharpshooter's rifle. He was to shoot at the enemy as he thought best when any of them came within his range.

There was a lively skirmish and the Confederates, who were fighting bravely, fired some shells, and Amos was struck by a piece of shell and was badly wounded in his hip so he could not walk. His regiment was driven off, and not until night did anyone come to pick up the dead and wounded. And, even then, Amos came very near being left to die. When the soldiers came at first they could not find him, for he was hidden in the thicket and was so weak he could not call loud enough to make them hear.

But Bark came with the men from Amos' company, and he kept running round and round until he found his master. Then he set up such an excited yapping that one of the seekers heard him and went to see what ailed him.

There was poor Amos, almost dead, and his life was saved only by the greatest care.

Amos soon came home on sick leave. He brought Bark with him but the little dog was not allowed to go to the war again. He lived to be an old dog, and was renamed "Soldier." When he died the children of Amos put a monument over his little grave telling all about his saving his master's life, and on Decoration Day the children always put a little flag over the place where the brave dog lies.

And we all agreed after we heard this true story that the dog deserves to be called "The Friend of Man."

It is funny how often on the same day we get to thinking and talking about entirely different things. On the evening of the day we were talking about dogs we were idling about in the front

yard—that is, Uncle Fred and Jim and I —when Uncle Fred said:

“Well, Jim, what is it?” for Jim was looking sober.

“I was just thinking what a good fellow mamma is.”

“Woman, you mean,” I said.

“No, I don’t. Mamma and I had a bully time last night before papa came home and while you were off with Uncle Fred. She told me something that has made a new thinking inside me. I guess it must be in my heart.”

“What was it, Jim?” Uncle Fred asked.

“Mamma said that we must learn the ‘Father-Mother’ presence of God before the real meaning of being ‘at one,’ or at-one-ment was made plain. In the man the feminine intuition was to be cultivated, and in the woman the masculine reason was to be brought forth, to make a perfect whole. The more even, I guess, the better. Anyway, I have been think-

ing what makes papa so good is the mother part of him."

"Then mamma must be good because she has so much papa."

"Well, anyway," said Jim, "both together of them is better than either alone."

"Good for you, Jim," said Uncle Fred, "you have unconsciously repeated almost the words of a famous preacher."

"Proof of my great mind, isn't it?" said Jim. "What were the words, Uncle Fred?"

"The great preacher said that 'man as man was better than woman, that woman as woman was better than man, but that both together were better than either alone.'"

"Was he a New Thought man?" Jim asked.

"Yes; but he was born fifty years or more too soon—"

Just then Jim gave a howl, turned a complete summersault, and started down the hill. He was after Bildad about something.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONSCIENCE.

There is one thing certain, if Jim and I haven't done quite as well as we expected in keeping the new way of living, we have got to thinking in a new way and getting lots of enjoyment out of things we never dreamed of before. May be it is because we ask so many questions, but papa and mamma always encourage us in that.

The evening of the day when we went through the pasture with Uncle Fred we were all together on the piazza and Jim and I were telling of what we had seen. "We've got lots to learn about seeing, Kit," said Jim. "Why," he went on, "I

don't believe we could even see a ghost, unless it was pointed out to us!"

"I believe you never will," laughed papa, who had overheard us; "that is, if you have a healthy mind."

"But were there never any ghosts at any time?" asked Jim. "If there were never any ghosts why are the old story books so full of them, and why are some people afraid of them, even now? Viggo Slann wouldn't go through a graveyard at night for anything. He says there are what he calls 'hants' there, and that it isn't safe, by a long shot."

"There are no ghosts," was papa's answer. "The belief in them is but a relic of the old superstition prevailing in the world when people had not learned as much of God's ways as now. Had it been his will that those who have gone from this world before us should appear to us again in this world, rest assured they would not come in the ridiculous

or alarming shape the foolish and ignorant describe. They would not be flitting aimlessly around graveyards at night, nor haunt old houses where some crime may have been committed. They would be in better business. Those who loved us, you may be certain, would come in loving and reasoning guise, and we would not be afraid, but would be glad. But God in his wisdom has not seen fit that those who have preceded us in the world to come, should visit us here again. We hope and feel that we shall meet them, but he has seen best to assure us of that in other ways than through their appearances and messages. It is all for the best, somehow. You needn't fear. There are no ghosts."

"It would be pretty uncomfortable work to be a ghost, anyhow, if there were any," remarked Jim. "To be scooting about in a graveyard at night, in winter, without any fire, or wandering,

with your throat cut, up and down the hallways of some falling-down old house, ought to be trying on the system, especially to the women and children ghosts. I'd rather have a job in brighter places, and in the daytime."

"Well, I'm not surprised at your taste in the matter," said papa, "though darkness is nothing to be afraid of. You have both been taught that. I'm glad to know that Kit, here, is not afraid to go into the cellar at night for anything we want, and to have noticed, too, that, when she knows just where the thing is, she doesn't take a lamp. The fear of darkness is, in itself, partly a superstition allied with the ghost foolishness, or, it may be, a dim inheritance coming down from the time when dangerous wild animals were abundant, when human beings, then comparatively defenseless, could not safely venture out at hours when they couldn't see as well

as could the beasts. But there are no wild beasts to dread in most countries now, and darkness comes only as the time of needed rest and sleep, to refresh us for the daylight again."

"But isn't there anything in the world to be afraid of," asked Jim, "anything that we can't see, or touch, but just, somehow, feel? Isn't our conscience that way?"

I was astonished at Jim. I didn't know that he had paid any particular attention to conscience, himself, though, when we disagree sometimes about the division of things, or something like that, he puts on a solemn face, though he can't always keep his eyes sober, and says, in a sad voice, that he will leave it to my conscience. Then I generally give in, though I have my doubts. Now, his question showed that he had been really thinking about conscience sometimes when I never suspected him.

Papa was going to explain, when Mr. Duncan called to see him about something, and then Uncle Fred and Jim and I went out on the porch and sat watching fireflies, or lightning-bugs, as most of the children call them. I guess both names are right. Uncle Fred was telling a funny story, which he said he was afraid wasn't quite true, about a man who was so stingy that he mixed lightning-bugs with his bees so that the bees could work at night, when Jim broke out again:

"What is there about conscience, anyhow?"

"There's a good deal," said Uncle Fred. "It seems to me that the most wonderful difference between human beings and all other animals is that we have what we call a conscience. We have a something within us which tells us when we have done wrong, a regret and, sometimes, far more than that,

something which clings to us. I will give you an illustration. There are thousands and tens of thousands of men and women in the world, good men and women, too, who will go down to their graves regretful and conscience-pricked, because they forgot one thing. Away from their parents, absorbed with their own affairs, they have neglected their father and mother, those who brought them into the world and cherished them and cared for them. They may have been grateful to their parents in a way; but what a father or mother hungers for in old age is the continuance of something like the trust and companionship there was before the child left home. Occasional letters, little remembrances on birthdays, visits and the constant keeping up of the relationship of youth—these are the real things that make parents happy in their old age. They do not like to think that they are most of

the time forgotten. Always remember that. Even the Chinese, it seems to me, are better than we in this one thing. They are lovingly attentive to their parents to the end of life, while we are careless. Many a time I have heard some man or woman say: 'I wish I had been more thoughtful. They would have been so much happier, and I would now have something to be glad of, something comforting to me always.'

"I've only spoken of this one thing to show you what conscience is. Of course there are a thousand times in our daily life when conscience speaks at once and sometimes, loudly. We may crush it for a time, but it rises again. It is always with us. I read a strange poem not long ago, which I have in my pocket-book and which describes our conscience, but not, I think, in the way it should be pictured. It is one of the things which tells us there is another life. It is

God guarding and advising us. The poem does not give the right idea, but it at least tells us how watchful conscience is. I'll read you a verse or two of it:

THE GRAY PATROL.

Taut bridle, comrade; the ride is done;
There is no debate—the Patrol has won.
Slower we'll ride till we fairly brave
The gap in our way which man calls the grave;
But, even then, shall we know our dole
From our life is paid to the Gray Patrol,
What some call Conscience, the Gray Patrol?

We have fought or fled in the reckless ride,
Through fields of yellow, through seeping tide;
We have turned, as the Berserker turned, at
bay;

We have hewed him down and have had our
way,

And again he has ridden—as yesterday—
Close beside us has leaped or stole—
Close beside us, the Gray Patrol.

When days were ruddy, when days were dark,
We have left him lying, face up and stark;
We have left him, fully and fairly slain,

But ever he leaps into life again,
And ever he rides at our bridle rein.
Ever he worries us, O, my soul,
Ever he rides with us, cheek by jowl,—
This clinging marshal, the Gray Patrol.

Taut bridle, comrade—the race is run—
There is no debate—the Patrol has won.

I am glad Uncle Fred explained that the queer poem did not tell us the right way to look upon conscience, though it seems to me as if I shall often think of it for a moment as something gray and watchful and never dying. I shall try to consider it always as our best friend, going along with us and caring for us and pointing out the dangerous places.

And I learned more than that about just leaning on what conscience told us to do and then doing it, and then, after that, fearing nothing and having a feeling of strength, of being able to do almost anything. I asked papa, one evening, if God gave us conscience to

show that he was backing us up—may be that wasn't a very good expression—as long as we did what it told us?

"There are some things," said papa, very earnestly, "that no one can understand. God is so great that it is beyond the power of any human being to imagine him. We say 'him,' speaking of God, but we must not think of God as a man. 'God is a spirit.' 'God is love.' We can neither describe nor imagine spirit or love in any solid, tangible or visible form. A great, brooding influence, active in all things, controlling all things for good, is God.

"You can love and trust God but you can never understand him. It is enough to believe. Job, the just and good man, when he was sorely troubled, said: 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him.' He could not understand why God afflicted his loyal servant, but he trusted and loved God still, knowing that 'God is love.'

“Lift yourself toward God by praying, and by thinking of all his goodness as shown by everything around you; by your loving mother, and by your friends; by the beautiful flowers and trees, and the grass which clothes the bare earth. Every moment God’s love surrounds you,—but you may as well know now and forever that there are limits to human powers. There is the unknowable, the unthinkable, and God no one can encompass or understand.

“It is just the same with a grown-up, strong man, who has been out a long time in the world of grown-up people, though in a different way, as it is with you two children.

“A man, unless he has the broader thought, has the same apprehension when he goes out to get a note extended—that means asking somebody to give you a longer time in which to pay some money—that you have, perhaps, when

you come to ask your mother or me about something.

“Or it may be, that instead of going to ask a favor, it is something—some business proposition that will be of benefit both to him and the other man. In the first case—when he is asking a favor—he knows what he wants, perfectly, and knows how to utilize what he is asking for, and he puts the case bluntly, and takes the consequences. In the second case he knows that he thinks he is right and so puts the proposition bluntly too, and takes the consequences.

“By bluntly, I do not mean roughly, but with all good sense and confidence—honest confidence and firmness. When you go to other people doubtfully, you do not impress them rightly, though you may be right. When you go to them strong and confident, the one man gives you a longer time in which to pay your money, and the other joins with you

like a brother in your enterprise. There is something between minds—something which we do not understand as yet, but which comes from the good God who has arranged these things—that communicates itself between minds and makes others trust you or join with you, they could not tell why themselves.

“It is so with the affairs of you children: it will be so all through life.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY.

"Run along—I am in a lazy mood, but I will catch up with you before you get home."

That was what Uncle Fred said as Jim and I walked with him along the country road that comes into Merrivale from the woods. It was toward evening, and Jim and I were hungry after our long walk, but we were not tired. Uncle Fred was not tired, either, but I had a feeling that he wanted to be alone there on the still road, and so Jim and I chased each other down the hill and across the meadow where the foot-path runs 'cross lots from the wide, curving road, to the town.

"Queer about grown up people," Jim

said, when we came to a walk in Potter's pasture. "They like to be alone sometimes, papa says, but boys like best to go in a crowd. Uncle Fred is better company than any boy I know. I wonder what he wants to be alone for? He's standing there on top of the hill and does not see us, or he would wave his hat."

We waved at him, but he didn't notice us, so we went on.

"Did you ever think that Uncle Fred's heart was broken?" I asked.

"Jim was so surprised and tickled at the idea that he threw himself down on the grass and rolled over two or three times before he answered.

"Heart-broken! You're silly! Men's hearts don't break. You must think Uncle Fred is made of something brittle!"

"I don't either," I said; "I'm in real earnest, and you needn't laugh. Mary

Duncan was speaking, only yesterday, of the change that has come over Uncle Fred since last summer when he was so much at Colonel Nesbit's."

"He's a lot jollier, and more with us than he was last year, Kit, and you know it."

"But Jim," I answered, "there's no use of your denying it—Miss Nesbit is a beautiful young lady, and last year everyone said that Uncle Fred was going to marry her, and they were devoted to each other, and now they haven't really spoken yet. Uncle Fred looked quite pale tonight and you know we met Miss Nesbit again today and they were just as stiff as ever. Didn't she look sweet, in her white dress?"

"How girls talk!" was all Jim answered; then, after a while, he said, in a sort of contradicting way, "He is only hungry," meaning Uncle Fred, I suppose. And just then he came loping

along after us and we came home, all three together.

We had an extra fine dinner, and in the midst of it I felt something against me under the tablecloth. It was Jim handing me a note written on his dinner napkin with a blue pencil, of course when mamma wasn't looking.

"Broken heart indeed!" it said, "Look at him eat!"

My feelings were hurt. Uncle Fred was certainly making the spring lamb and green peas look scary.

But we have really been troubled awfully, all of us children, I mean, unless it might be Jim and Sandy, over Uncle Fred and Miss Nesbit. We all like both of them so that we've wanted to have them make up. I had a long talk with Mary, and we decided that something ought to be done, and Ellen and Agnes said they would help, and so did even Johnny Lane, who said it was

what he esteemed an important matter, and we liked him for it, even if he does sometimes use such dignified words. We made a firm resolution.

So, that evening, though Jim had passed me such a scornful note at table, I had a talk with him again and he was pretty good about it and said, finally, that he would help, and get Sandy into it, too. We planned a while and Jim proposed that we call a meeting, to consider, he said, the state of the nation and Uncle Fred. Then he grinned, and used language almost as large as Johnny Lane's. He had become convinced, he declared, when he came to revolve the past in his mind, that something was far from well with our beloved Uncle.

Jim and Sandy belong to the Daniel Webster Debating Society, made up of the boys in their room at school. They are learning a great deal that is useful, and parliamentary law, besides. I don't

know what kind of law that is, but I am sure I have spelled it right.

I was appointed to call the meeting at two o'clock the next day, under the Farmer's Graft apple tree at the back of our orchard. It was to be a secret meeting, and everyone invited was given a pass-word. If anyone came without that word, he or she could not come over the orchard fence.

Jim took all night to think of the pass-word. In the morning he first gave me "Eureka." Then he changed his mind and gave me a new one. It was "Discretion." Before I started out to deliver the summons to the committee he wanted to change the password again, but I wouldn't do it, and so that was settled. As it happened I forgot and gave the word "Eureka" to some, and "Discretion" to others, but Jim was door-keeper and let all of the committee members in, no matter what they said, and

they all came, even the Rat; but the Slann boys, when they came about, were kept away most of the time. They were not on the committee.

We did not call John Peterson to this meeting, either. Jim said that he did not care to have John know about an affair so important to the family. It was all right to take the Duncans and Lanes into our confidence, but with Johannesburg Pietersburg it was different.

Johnny Lane thought, when he heard of Pietersburg's being left out, that Jim wanted to run the committee himself, but when Johnny said this, Jim used very hard words and it almost broke up the meeting, until I called Jim to his senses by reminding him of what mamma had said to us, only the night before, about self-control.

"If you can not rule yourself," she said, "you can not control anyone else." And she gave us the text to learn:

"He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city."

Jim looked vexed at first, but he made an effort to keep calm, and came out nobly. "I guess I can rule a city," he said.

"I nominate James Lawson for chairman," broke in Sandy Duncan.

We all shouted "Aye!" and Jim took his seat in the shade, with his back against the apple tree.

"I will appoint John Lane secretary," he said, with great dignity, first looking in his little book at the place his thumb held ready for him.

Then we all cheered, and Johnny made a speech in which he called Jim a "Magnanimous Hector" and compared him to Aristides the Just, whoever he was.

The Lane girls giggled at this speech; but Mary and I, realizing the grave situation, remained quiet and attentive.

"The secretary will read the call for this

meeting and state its object," remarked Jim, with terrible suddenness, rising to his feet. He had looked at his book again during the applause. Now he glared fiercely at Johnny Lane, who had perched upon a lower limb of the tree.

Johnny flushed crimson. "I don't know the object of this meeting—the invitations to it were not written," he managed to say at last, hopping off the branch he had been sitting on.

Sandy and the Rat grinned, and then I noticed that everyone was looking at me, for I had told them all to come to the meeting, and had given each one the secret password.

Jim fixed a piercing gaze upon me, too, and said: "If there is no objection Katherine Lawson will state the object of this meeting."

This was awful. Here I was called on to make a speech in a meeting! I rose from the ground, and tried to say some-

thing and couldn't. I just sort of clucked, and then started to run away.

"Come back!" yelled Jim, and he ran after me and caught me. Then we all sat down in a ring on the grass and talked over the love of Uncle Fred and Miss Nesbit and its sad ending. •

We talked and talked, but we couldn't seem to decide what we could do about it. We all agreed that Uncle Fred and Miss Louise Nesbit would make a handsome couple, and Jim said he had begun last year to practice saying "Aunt Louise," to himself, and was sorry he had to drop it.

Finally Jim settled our anxious fears by making Johnny Lane a committee of one to see Uncle Fred, seriously, and I was chosen to call on Miss Nesbit and reason with her over the blasting of all Uncle Fred's hopes, to say nothing of the feelings of the rest of the family.

Then the Slann boys got over the fence, and the meeting broke up.

I knew that if I waited until night my courage would give way and, besides, I might tell mamma too soon, and, as the whole matter must be kept within the breasts of the committee, I acted at once.

Dressed in my pink flowered organdie and my new white hat, I started across the town to Colonel Nesbit's. Mamma had told me that she was going to be in that neighborhood, making some visits, and that she would call for me at half-past five. Mamma didn't ask me why I was going to see Miss Nesbit, for she knows I like her very much and often spend a day with her, and mamma says there could be no better company for anyone than that very young lady.

It was a tremendous moment to me, this time, when I found myself sitting in Miss Nesbit's room with her, while she sewed upon a new gown for her mother. The Nesbits used to be rich people, but a few years ago Colonel

Nesbit lost his property by some misfortune, and lately it has been pretty hard for him to get along. He is a brave old soldier and a very highly respected gentleman. Papa says no one in all the country round is more thought of than Colonel Nesbit. Miss Louise always makes her own gowns, and her mother's, and mamma says they are the best dressed women in Merrivale; that is, they are dressed in the best taste.

I watched Miss Louise as she gathered a long, long ruffle, and at last I got courage enough to speak.

"Dear Miss Louise," I began, "don't you intend ever to be married?"

"Why, what a question!" she answered, and her cheeks were as red as roses.

"Because," I went on, very slowly, for I was scared, "if you ever marry any man but Uncle Fred, there will be a broken heart right here in Merrivale, and if you don't marry at all I am afraid

there will still be a heart nearly broken."

Miss Nesbit didn't say a single word. She only thought a little while and then took me by my hands and drew me close to her and kissed me, and then she began to put away her work, and took up her hat and we went into the garden. There she began to hum a little tune and cut a lot of flowers. I just followed her around like Mary's little lamb, and while we were out there in the garden mamma drove up in her phaeton, and we ran to her and fairly buried her in roses, and pinks and lilies.

All this time Miss Nesbit said hardly a word to me, but when we went away she kissed me again and I knew she was not offended. But I almost cried as I sat by mamma's side on our way home.

I had failed, completely failed, in my important mission!

I did not hear until later how Johnny had fared. It took him some time to get

alone with Uncle Fred, but one day a chance came, when they were fishing near each other and the fish wouldn't bite.

Johnny told Jim, and Jim told me what was said; but Johnny never talked to me about it.

"Mr. Rathburn," began Johnny, solemnly, "do you feel in your inmost soul, that it is good for man to live alone?"

Uncle Fred looked at Johnny almost wildly, so Johnny told Jim.

"I mean," Johnny went on, "is it well to ignore the best and brightest things in life, and settle down to live in splendid solitude when all around are happy homes to mock at your despair?"

Johnny couldn't tell Jim what he meant exactly by splendid solitude, but he thought the words went well together, and they do.

What do you think Uncle Fred did at this important moment?

Why, he just lay back on the bank of Indian Creek and rolled over and laughed until the sound brought all the other boys to him, for they were scattered along the creek, trying to fish, and wondering where Johnny was. At one glance all of them knew that Johnny had undertaken his task as a committee of one, and had failed to get satisfaction from Uncle Fred.

The committee of inquiry met once more to hear of what had happened, and all agreed with Johnny, when he handed in a carefully written out report of one line, saying, "The whole affair has ended in Black Failure!"

We had meant so well, and it all came to nothing! We felt very deeply over it, especially Mary and I.

CHAPTER X.

THE GREAT KOPJE FIGHT.

The great Kopje Fight came about through John Peterson. He had been insisting again that the boys should call him Johannesburg Pietersburg, and they wouldn't do it because they declared that, just as they had told him before, it was too long a nickname. He became indignant and said they should call him what he pleased, and if there had been only one of them he might have been obliged, for he is nearly sixteen and is big and strong and only goes out with the boys Saturday afternoons, when he doesn't have to work. Finally, Johnny Lane proposed that they should decide it "by gage of battle," whatever that may be, and it was agreed to.

John was to defend what they called a Kopje, and, if all the boys could drive him away from it, they should have the right to call him any name they chose; while, if John held the fort they were, ever afterward, to call him Johannesburg Pietersburg.

At one place on the rocky hill on one side of the pasture lot a big flat rock sticks out from a steep place behind, about eight feet up, and this was to be the Kopje. John Peterson and all the other boys except the Rat—who they said wasn't big enough to be of any good—got long poles, with a flour-bag tied around one end of each, so that they couldn't hurt much, and John Peterson climbed up to his Kopje and told them to come on. It was agreed that no one should throw a stone or a club or lump of clay.

It was an awful battle! The boys rushed up frantically and speared at

John Peterson, but he put his back against the hill and they couldn't move him. They didn't get off so well themselves. John has long arms and he caught them in the chest, one after another, as they rushed upon him, and over they went, until Johnny Lane declared the ground was "littered with the slain." Sandy went over into a mud-hole and came out a sight. Time and time again they charged, while Jim yelled, "Die game!" and Johnny Lane loudly recited, "Strike for your altars and your fires!" but they couldn't dislodge the enemy. They were getting tired and gloomy and John Peterson was walking back and forth on his rock, shouting out, "I be Johannesburg Pietersburg!" when "spat!" something struck the stony hillside, close behind him.

John Peterson gave a jump and shout and then, "spat" and "splash," something struck again and something yel-

low ran down from his shoulder. He seemed almost to stagger. The boys stood amazed for a moment and then all whooped wildly when they discovered what was going on. No wonder John Peterson looked sick.

There, behind a big stump, at one side but pretty close to the Kopje, stood the Rat, grinning with pride and just drawing his arm back for another throw. In his hand was something white, but at first they couldn't tell what it was. He let it go with all his might and then, when it struck and was crushed against the rock behind John Peterson, and something yellow splashed about, they knew.

One of the Duncans' hens had been sitting for over two weeks on fourteen eggs, in a nest in the barn. The nest was under a manger in a stall which was not used in the stable part, but a horse put in the next stall kicked down

the partition and the hen got frightened and finally left her nest altogether. The boys found the eggs and broke one of them. That was enough! The smell was something awful, and they got away in a hurry, leaving the rest of the eggs just where they were. The despised Rat, who the rest of the boys said would be of no use in the great battle, had heard the agreement that there should be no bombarding, as Johnny Lane called it, with clubs or stones or dried clay lumps, had hung around very gloomily for a while and then suddenly ran away. No one could tell what possessed him, but it must have come into his mind that eggs were not barred, and so the little wretch had run after those awful things in the barn and come back with his hat nearly full of them.

The boys gave a tremendous shout as the Rat threw again, this time hitting John Peterson and smashing the egg all

over his breast, for, though the Rat is small, he is a good thrower. John Peterson gasped and strangled and got whiter yet and the boys gave a great shout and charged again, but they didn't charge far; they got close to the Kopje, then stopped suddenly and then all backed away, looking queer. John Peterson let his spear fall and almost fell himself, as he climbed to the ground and staggered quite a way off and lay down in the grass.

"You win!" he said, quite nobly I thought. "My name be John Peterson."

He got better pretty soon and took off his coat and rolled it up to be washed, and then concluded to join the celebration. The boys called him "a noble foe," and he said they were "bully boys."

Johnny Lane took charge of the celebration. They put the Rat on a stump and pinned some red leaves on his shoulder, for epaulets, and Sandy hit

him with a little stick, to "Knight" him, he said, and make him "a Peer of the rellum." The Rat tried to get away, but couldn't, and Johnny Lane declared it was "a glorious ending to a campaign red with carnage."

Jim asked Uncle Fred in the evening if the Rat's eggs were fair fighting, and Uncle Fred looked solemn and answered in loud words, that he had "never heard of anything definitely prohibiting the use of eggs as projectiles in the conduct of civilized warfare." That didn't interest me much, for I was thinking of the next night, when we were to go into the woods.

The big wood reaches back into a great swamp where the ground is low, and there are tamarack and black ash trees and dark thickets. The creek runs through the swamp, and in the middle is a great spreading pond, with pools all around it, where there are rushes and

cat-tails, and in places where the ground is a little higher in spots, there are massive clumps of dark ferns. The swamp is of no use for farming, and so it had been left just as it is, a damp, low place with such birds and creatures in it as do not prefer the higher woods and more sunlight. In the daytime it is very still.

Not far from the swamp, on one side, where there is cleared land, is a corn-field, and the farmer who owned it had complained that the raccoons were tearing down and eating the corn, which was just ripe enough for them. There is an old man who lives in the Flats who owns what he calls "a coon dog," and Uncle Fred told Jim that if he and Sandy could borrow that dog we would all go cooning together. They arranged with the old man somehow and brought the dog home.

Of course a girl is not always expected

to be a judge of dogs, but I know that this was not a noble-looking one. He was yellow and had only the very stub of a tail and one ear which hung down limply. They said the dog was part beagle, which must be some unhappy kind of dog by nature, for this one had the most melancholy look on his face I ever saw on anything.

Night came and we all started out, Uncle Fred and Jim and Sandy and I. Jim carried a lantern and it seemed curious when we got away from town and close to the field, there was so little sound. The night was dark but the air was soft and the smell of the growing corn was delicious. We climbed the fence and went along silently between the tall rows until we got nearly to the middle of the field and then Uncle Fred said "Find 'em," and the dog slipped away out of sight, with his nose close to the ground and sniffing as he went. We

waited and waited, and then, away off in front of us, we heard a yelp. We hurried on until we got to the fence close to the woods, and soon we heard the sound again, only it wasn't like the first, a yelp, but an "oo-oo-oo," a sort of long cry which wasn't either a bark or a howl, but just something mellow and eager.

Now we were in for it. We climbed that fence and were in the woods, stumbling ahead after Jim with the lantern. I had a very short dress on and my thickest shoes and got along almost as well as the boys, with Uncle Fred's help in getting over the logs we came to. At last we reached the swamp but we didn't stop, and kept on until we got to the shores of the big pond in its very center. Oh, but it was dark there! You could barely see the water. Away off, on the other side of the pond, the dog was still making that strange noise. All at once he stopped, and began a deep barking.

"He's treed the coon," said Uncle Fred.

The boys were wild and were going to rush forward at once, but Uncle Fred stopped them.

"It's a hard way around the pond," he said. "There are fallen logs and plenty of water holes, and I think we'd better not try to take Kit along. Are you afraid?" he said, as he turned to me. "It will test your pluck, my girl, for we've got to take the lantern along and it will be dark and black here and you will hear some queer sounds. There'll be nothing to hurt you, though. Dare you stay?"

At first I almost shrieked. I trembled all over at the thought of the blackness and the loneliness and of what there might be about me, and I didn't answer. Then I happened to think of what I had been taught, that there was nothing about darkness to be afraid of, and that God would be with me, anyhow, and I set my teeth together as hard as I could.

After a moment or two, I managed to say that I'd stay.

"You've got the right idea, and you've got courage, Kit," said Uncle Fred, and he kissed me, and they made a fine seat for me by a big tree close to the water, and away they went. I could hear their voices and see the light of the lantern bobbing about for a little while and then all was black and still.

It seemed as if I could hardly breathe. Pretty soon I thought I heard a slight sound in the rushes growing in the water near me, and soon I was sure of it. There was a rustle and then a splashing in the water and I knew something was moving about. There was a sound almost like a whisper and then a "tweet, tweet," and more splashing. I never moved. Suddenly I jumped to my feet in awful terror. "Ah-rr-oomp! Ah-rr-oomp! Ba-rr-oomp!" came a great bel-
lowing from the edge of the pond close

beside me. I stood shaking. Then the great sound came again, and I stood it a little more bravely and could begin to think a little. I knew what it must be; it was only some huge bullfrog who happened to have his home there and who had been frightened away when we came up noisily with the lantern. My courage came back, and I sank down very quietly and slowly into my seat again.

The next minute there was the softest kind of whirr and I knew something had passed close over my head. Then, a few moments later, came the wild, dreadful hoot of an owl somewhere in the woods. It was that, I suppose, which had flown over me. The echoes had scarcely stopped when there was a sort of snarling scuffle somewhere along the shore and I knew that coons were quarreling, for I had seen a tame coon once, and heard the noise he made when

angry. It gave me a queer feeling, though, there in the gloom.

All at once, there shone a light spot away out in the water, and it grew and grew until it covered nearly half the pond. The thick clouds that had hidden all the sky had parted for a moment and let a dim bit of moonlight through. Across the light space were darting streaks and soon there came into plain sight a small black head of something swimming which passed across the light spot and was gone. Then the clouds came together again and all seemed darker and more mysterious than before.

But, somehow, I was not afraid. I kept saying to myself two of the verses we had been taught, and all seemed well. The verses were:

"There shall no evil befall thee."

"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear."

How could I really be afraid! It was all new to me and unknown, but I was safe. I could feel it, and I leaned back against the tree, and fairly drank in everything that came to my senses. There were two sounds that never ceased. One was just a soft sighing of the wind through the leaves of the trees, and the other a drowsy humming of all the insects of the night. The sounds blended together and I don't think that I ever heard anything so deliciously sleepy before. My seat was comfortable and I leaned back against the tree and, finally, my head began to nod and all the sounds came dimmer and dimmer, but I didn't care. I was only glad. I remember repeating another text just as I do nights when I feel I am going to sleep at home.

"I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only maketh me to dwell in safety," and that was all. I

awoke with a start. "Gulp, gulp! Gurggle, gurggle! Oomp!" It was the queerest sound yet. I'd never heard anything like it, but it wasn't alarming. It was only something to startle a little and then to seem almost ridiculous. I learned afterward what it was, just as I learned about the other creatures I heard or saw that night. It was a kind of small heron which is very common and in the country is called by odd names such as "fly-up-the-creek" or "shitepoke." One of the names is "thunder-pump," which seems to me a very good one for it, considering the absurd sound it makes.

I was wide awake again now and I made myself comfortable once more and listened. There were more sounds breaking in all the time on the softness and silence and I fairly reveled in it all. I was learning more and more about some of God's creatures and their home lives and I just loved them. Then there came

a shout and I called back as loud as I could, and soon I heard the voices of the boys and saw the light of the lantern. They were all with me in no time. They had not caught the coon for it had gone up too big a tree, but they'd had plenty of excitement, they said. I was kind of glad the coon had got away.

It doesn't seem necessary to tell all Uncle Fred said to me about what he called my courage, but, while I liked it, I knew that there had been no need of courage at all. It had turned into a great pleasure and made me very happy. It had been a wonderful night. I got, somehow, closer to God's creatures and I hope it made me better and more understanding about the Caring that is everything.

CHAPTER XI.

PRIDE BEFORE A FALL.

Now I come to something I don't like to tell about, but I must.

Jim and I had been getting along pretty well in our new way of living, but we both found out that some of our faults were pretty hard to get rid of. I'm afraid I have quite a bad temper, and it is only by constant thinking of what is good, and true, and kind that I can keep it down. As for Jim, he is, I think, a pretty good brother; but he says that he has found out his "mean streak," and that, according to him, is too much love for one Jim Lawson—his way.

We have had more or less trouble to keep always thoughtful and good natured, according to mamma's instructions, and once in a while, when we

have been discouraged, we have had a good long talk with papa and mamma, and then we would start in all over again feeling as if we could not fail in the plain, straight way they showed us.

But I'm only keeping back my story. What I mean to say is that Jim and I can't pretend to be anything more than a couple of children trying to live right and think right, but sometimes we fail to be even half-way decent.

We had been planning, for days, to have the best time in all the world on July fifteenth, Jim's birthday. Uncle Fred promised to devote the day to us, and we voted to spend it in the woods, inviting Mary, Agnes and Ellen, Johnny Lane, Johannesburg Pietersburg, and Alexander and the Rat as our guests for all day.

Mamma helped us and we planned baskets of good things to eat to last the day through, even for a dozen hungry people.

All went well until the day before the picnic, when who should drop down, as if out of the skies, but Aunt Flo and her two children, Joe and Carrie.

Aunt Flo lives on a farm in the West, and she hasn't been East to visit since she went away as a bride, years and years ago, before I was born.

Mamma was so glad to see her sister that she laughed and cried at once, and papa said that there should be a holiday all the time while we visited together. We could see that he and Uncle Fred were as glad to see Aunt Flo as mamma was.

But, oh, if I could describe to you how queer Cousin Joe and Cousin Carrie looked! Their faces were red and freckled and their hands were as brown as an oak leaf in the fall. And their clothes didn't look as if they were made for them at all, but they were, for Carrie told me that her mamma made

everything she and Joe owned, even their best, which they had worn on the railroad train, coming from Kansas. It was their "best" that they looked so funny in.

But Jim found out that Joe could swim better than he could, and that he knew all about fishing, and could tell a meadow-lark or a bobolink or almost any other bird as far off as he could see or hear one. And Joe could turn hand-springs "to beat the band," Jim said, and he could lift heavy weights, and throw a ball straight, and so it didn't take him long to get in with all of the boys.

As for Carrie, her hair was "shingled" she said, when I asked her what had happened to it, and she could run fast, and that was about all I had found out about her by the morning of the fifteenth, Jim's birthday.

Mamma and Aunt Flo had been helping the cook, and so the lunch-baskets

were filled with good things and, at nine o'clock in the morning, we started from home to call for the Duncans and the Lanes, as we went toward the big woods where Uncle Fred had chosen our camp for the day.

Uncle Fred led Cousin Carrie by the hand. Her pink calico dress was fresh and clean, and her hat had some faded pink roses in it, and she wore white stockings and thin shoes—I can't tell what there was about her that looked queer, but somehow, she did seem different from any of the other girls, and I kept walking and talking with Mary Duncan and the Lane girls, and when we happened to meet Miss Louise Nesbit on the road as we crossed from the pasture, I hung back and sort of acted as if I didn't know who the girl in the pink frock, walking with Uncle Fred, was.

The disgraceful truth is, I was

ashamed of Cousin Carrie, and I made believe to the other girls that she was a very distant relation of ours, one scarcely to be counted at all, and as her name was Digby and had never been heard by any of us before, this seemed quite natural to them.

We noticed that Uncle Fred bowed very coldly to Miss Nesbit, who was riding her own bay horse, Leander, and that Miss Nesbit only just bent her head a little, as she saw Uncle Fred. But she blushed until her cheeks were rosy, and they are generally quite pale.

It is sad to see lovers parted.

When we came to the creek there were the Slann boys wading for minnows, for bait. They grinned when they saw us with our baskets, hammocks, fishing rods, and all, and when we had crossed the creek they tagged us along through the edge of the woods until, finally, Uncle Fred called Jim to him and, speaking low,

so that the Slann boys could not hear, said:

"Jim, this is your day: would you like to invite Viggo and Max to go along?"

"Cert!" said Jim, and he ran back to the Slanns, and brought them up to Uncle Fred, and soon the boys were all running races and chasing through the woods in the direction of our camping-place, Cousin Carrie in the midst of the runners.

"I am afraid that Digby girl is a tom-boy!" I said, to Mary Duncan, and felt my cheeks burn with anger.

"Your Uncle Fred seems to like her very much, said Mary.

"Oh no, he doesn't!" I replied, quickly. "She is a stranger and so he has to be polite to her."

"It is a wonder you don't try a little politeness on your cousin, yourself," said Mary. The Scotch are a blunt people.

I flew into a rage and before I knew

what I had said all three of the girls were around me, half crying, and we were all chattering and scolding so fast we must have astonished the bluejays and made them envy us.

We were close by Ford's Pond, and as we skirted the swamp at one end of the clear water, we suddenly, all four of us, were frozen stiff with horror, at the sight we saw. Viggo Slann was coming running toward us with three or four long, dark things dangling from his hand.

"He's got a whole nest of snakes!" shouted Agnes, and then we ran! Never did I run so fast in my life! We scrambled over logs and brush-heaps and fences, and all the time that awful Viggo was running at our heels, shouting. Once I heard him cry, "Stop! I hurt you not!" but I only ran the faster. We never halted until we came to Uncle Fred, calmly sitting on a stump and waiting for us.

"What's up?" he asked, surprised as we all threw ourselves upon him.

"Viggo! Snakes!" was all we could pant out.

Then Viggo came up, breathing hard. I couldn't look straight at him, but, from under Uncle Fred's arm I just glanced that way, and I could see him holding up his hand—and something dangling—and then I just screamed again and hid my eyes.

"Look up, child," said Uncle Fred, laughing. "Look; see what Viggo has. It is not a snake!"

I looked, and Viggo came toward us again, holding at arm's length a bunch of big white water-lilies, with their long, brown stems dangling almost to the ground.

He took off the rim of the hat he wore, for it hadn't any crown to speak of, and awkwardly bending over, gave a stiff nod of his head and said:

"For de birt'day table!"

"Viggo, you're a fine fellow," said Uncle Fred, and Viggo ran away grinning so hard it almost showed at the back of his head.

After that, we girls walked on with Uncle Fred, and he told us the names of new birds we saw and helped us to know their notes and songs, and before we knew it Carrie was strolling along in the group, listening to all that was said, and once in a while saying something herself in the slow, drawling way in which she and Joe talked.

When we came to the big trees, our chosen picnic place, it was beautiful, sitting in the shade, telling stories and chatting while Uncle Fred and the boys amused themselves about the pool made by the brook near by. There were lots of dragon-flies about, some of them splendid with their big, bright-colored wings. The boys caught one and had a great

time examining it and telling stories of it. The dragon-flies catch and eat smaller insects, and many people call them "mosquito hawks," but, mostly, they are called "Devil's darning needles." There is a story that they will sew up your lips with thread made out of spider's web, if you talk too much. Of course that can't be true, but, when we were younger, we girls never much liked to be about where they were.

Carrie, after sitting still for a while, bent down a young tree, and called to Ellen to come and "teeter" with her. So the two thrashed up and down and sung, and had a jolly time, until Agnes joined them, and Mary said, "Carrie knows how to have a good time, doesn't she?"

But I only turned away my head and said, "I don't know anything about her!"

We had a fine day in the woods, but, by night, Carrie would not stay anywhere near me, and when we started for

home she ran on ahead, and reached there half an hour, almost, before the rest of us. She had gone to bed already, mamma said, and I fancied that mamma looked a little sad as she spoke of "Cousin Carrie."

I hadn't said anything rude or cross to Carrie, the whole day through, but, somehow, she knew I didn't like her or that I was ashamed of her in her queer clothes. I had felt that, all the afternoon—yet wouldn't make myself change my manner before Mary Duncan and the Lane girls.

And there was no getting around it, the day had been spoiled for me. I tried to pretend to myself that it was the coming of Joe and Carrie that had ruined everything, but deep down in my heart I knew better. It was I who had spoiled the day.

• That night, while papa and Aunt Flo sat on the porch, laughing and talking,

mamma and I had a long visit in my room, and I gave out entirely and told mamma everything that had happened all day, and, because I couldn't help telling then, especially how hateful I had been, I confessed even my jealousy over Uncle Fred's attention to Cousin Carrie, for that had been one of the worst things of all.

Mamma helped me ever so much. She didn't say anything harsh, but she was sure I had learned a good lesson that day. She said she would leave all to my conscience, at present, and that the next morning she would talk with me again and try to help me "overcome evil with good" in my own heart.

The next day mamma took pains to get an hour alone with me and when she began talking she told me something I had heard a little of before, but had never really attended to, about the time when she, herself, was a girl younger than I am.

It appears that Aunt Flo and mamma were orphan sisters, children of a clergyman, and alone in the world. Aunt Flo was several years older than mamma, and very highly educated. She taught French and Latin in a fashionable girls' school, and so supported her younger sister Frances, who came in time to be my mother. Your uncle Fred was away with a distant relation.

"I laughed when I saw Carrie," said mamma, "for excepting the sunburn and freckles, she looks almost exactly as I did when I was of her age. And, although her clothes are of a little cheaper material than mine used to be, they have the same 'home-made' look that mine had.

"Ah, those little gowns and pinafores! How well I remember dear Sister Flo working over them, night after night, after her long day in school, in order that I might be presentable among the other girls.

"No matter how tired—how sleepy—she was, stitch, stitch, would go her hard-running sewing-machine, and on—on—would fly her busy fingers, until long after I was asleep. My school bills were paid by Sister Flo's exertion, and I in my plain garments was like a little gray wren in a convention of red birds. The girls at our school wore the daintiest of expensive gowns, hats and cloaks, and, more than once, I was taunted with allusions to my unfashionable, plain clothes by these ill-bred little school-girls. It was not, perhaps, so much their fault as that of their foolish mothers who had the bad taste and lack of judgment to dress them in that way, and I am glad to say that, nowadays, cultivated and refined people, no matter how wealthy they may be, dress their children only neatly and plainly for school.

"But at the time I suffered keenly. I was cut to the heart by those cruel,

thoughtless children, especially as I appreciated the goodness and unselfishness of my sister in clothing and educating me, and in giving me all of her time and attention. And now, here she is again, my sister Flo, the wife of a farmer. He is not very rich, but he is a fine man, with a character of dignified honesty and high principle—and sister Flo is bringing up her own little daughter as best she can, and”—

“O, mamma,” I wailed, “I didn’t speak of Cousin Carrie’s clothes!”—for I couldn’t endure to hear any more.

“No,” said mamma, “you said nothing in words, but Carrie felt your thought; you were ashamed of her, and thought flies faster than words, than sound, than sight. Carrie knew your feelings toward her, depend upon it, although she has said nothing about it to anyone. She came home last night, went to her mother and asked that she might go at

once to bed, as she was tired. I understood the situation in a moment. I know, my dear little girl, how fond you are of appearances, and how much you like all beauty and grace, especially in matters of dress, so I was quite prepared for your confession last night. But," went on the best mother in all the world, "I think, you love God. You love justice. You love beauty of soul as well as beauty that you can see only with your eyes, and, now that you see and understand more what the fault is, that can easily be overcome. The passing evil is gone and, I hope, will never return. All you need do is just love your Cousin Carrie. There is little need of long speeches of apology if we only love enough."

And that was all mamma said. I went to find Cousin Carrie and before an hour was gone she was as happy as I was. We became the very best friends, and, as I told Mary Duncan the next time I

saw her, I only wish Carrie were my sister instead of my first cousin, the child of mamma's only sister, Mrs. Florence Digby.

And only to think, that Jim had acted so much better than I. A little while after we had come home I went out on the porch for a moment and saw Uncle Fred and Jim coming down the walk from somewhere. Just as they got into the yard Uncle Fred caught hold of Jim and tripped him on the grass. As Jim rolled over there laughing Uncle Fred said:

"Old boy, you showed up well in letting those Slann boys come along today. You're getting something into your tough being, after all. You're all right!" Uncle Fred often talks to Jim in that way.

Jim sprang up and wrestled with Uncle Fred but didn't say anything. He looked really sober. I wonder if he too, has anything on his mind? "I hope not."

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEST OF JIM.

It has come! Jim *did* have something on his mind, very serious, and now we know all about it, and it is all over with, and I am glad of it. I feel sorry for the poor boy. He didn't like to talk to me but I got his promise to write it all out and here is what he says:

JIM'S STORY.

"I suppose I've got to write of everything just as it happened. Papa says it's not much use to think much about or talk over mistakes and wrongs done or suffered, that to 'cease from evil and do good' is all that is required of us. I believe that's so but it's not so easy as it sounds. Once in a while something is liable to happen to jar you.

"It was the afternoon of the Fourth of

July and I was on my way back from the Duncans, where we had been having a good time generally. We had some fireworks for night, when we boys were to let them off together in front of our house. I had in my coat pockets only a bunch of common fire-crackers and one cannon cracker—a whopper.

“I didn’t have anything on hand and so sat down on the edge of the sidewalk, for a while, just doing nothing. There was nothing alive in sight but Mulcahy’s old white horse dozing in the shafts of the rickety express wagon. He stood in the shade of a big cottonwood tree in front of Pettibone’s store. Mulcahy was nowhere around. It was a clear, hot day, and though old Jerry was three or four squares away from me I could almost count the flies on his dingy hide. Bildad came along. He’s learned the trick of butting boards off the fence back of the barn and is in the street half of the

time now. Being out so much seemed to get up his sporting spirit, too, for already he'd got so that he was ready for a fight at the drop of the hat and wasn't afraid of anything except Morsham's big bulldog down town, and me, for I'd clubbed him so much whenever he came at me that he'd become familiar with my power of arm. Yet I have never really hurt him. We played together, that's all.

"Bildad came up to where I was sitting and looked at me thoughtfully for a while and then put his head down and butted at me gently two or three times, for fun, to provoke me to a tussle. Finally, I caught hold of his horns and, after a little squabble, held him still. Then a funny idea came to me.

"I've seen, often, how a dog will act with a bunch of fire-crackers tied to his tail, and I began to wonder—I couldn't help it—how a goat would act if treated

the same way? I couldn't think of trying it, for I knew Bildad, and knew that there was no telling what he would do or what might happen. He is the most mysterious goat I ever saw; sometimes I think he is what they call a 'degenerate,' there's such a fearsome, and yet reckless look in his eye.

"But the idea of how he would act in front of fire-crackers kept fascinating me, try as hard as I could to think of something else. It was certain the performance would be something new and great, but I had a premonition. I ought to have heeded it more, but the more I thought the weaker I got, and, finally, I took out the crackers and laid them down beside me.

"I got foolish: 'Bildad,' I said, 'You need something to stir your blood, improve your circulation and assist digestion.' He made another mock lunge at me and then stood still thinking what

he would do next. 'Excitement is what you are after,' I went on, 'and you ought to have it.'

"Still I resisted but I know now, that the moment when I laid out the crackers was the turning point. I got desperate and suddenly cast reason to the winds.

"I made a slip-noose with some stout string I had, fastened all the crackers to it and then slipped the noose over Bildad's tail and drew it tight, which wasn't an easy job, for he'd begun to be a little restless and suspicious and there wasn't much of a tail to tie to, only a stub, such as goats have. Then, after some more trouble, I lighted the crackers with a piece of punk. The end of the bunch came first and the cannon-cracker quite a little later, so that it would go off when the others were about half done. Then I waited.

"Bildad didn't notice anything at once, but, when the first gentle fizz began, he

turned his head and looked at his tail inquiringly. In a moment or two, he got alarmed. He whirled about once or twice and suddenly the sputtering came and the sparks showed. He gathered his legs together and went straight up in the air as if he was shot out of a mortar and no sooner struck the ground than he went up again. He seemed all made of hair and whalebone. Then the first of the string of crackers went off.

"I've read about how a great shell leaves a big cannon but I never understood before. I'd fired one, only this was what they call the ricochetting kind, striking the ground here and there, as it went. There was one fierce 'B-l-a-a-t' and Bildad just hurled into space, headed down Main street for South America, blazing behind and making twenty feet at a jump. It wasn't running; it was just a 'yip' fiery passage away, the goat rising wavingly up and

down and crackling as he went, his feet only clipping the ground at the end of jumps. People came running out, but Bildad was half a block away before they could get into the street. Faster and faster he went down the slope until, as he struck ground at the end of the highest and longest jump yet, he landed just under old Jerry, and, at that very moment, the cannon cracker exploded and split open the atmosphere.

It was awful! Old Jerry rose up in the air, with his back curved, as Bildad passed through and on, fell flat on his side as he came down, rolled to his old feet again in a second, and was off on a dead run. He turned the first corner, with the wagon swinging and slatting and bounding behind him, and was out of sight in a minute.

"I was on a dead run too, and Bildad was still in sight. No turning for him! He wanted the Gulf of Mexico. Mar-

sham's bulldog saw him coming and darted out. They met at what is called a right angle, with the dog just a shade ahead. That dog, oh, where was he? He rose up and came down again and lay flopping around and howling, with two ribs broken; and Bildad had passed on.

"I raced away after the fiery streak, though my wind was giving out, clear through town and up the hill, with other boys chasing after me, and finally caught up with Bildad standing still in the middle of the road. The fire-crackers were gone and he seemed to be thinking hard. He turned his head and gave one look at me and then started down the crossroad. He didn't want my society. I saw him turn again to the left and knew he was going home. He'd had his Fourth.

"I came back on Main street feeling a little shaky — but it had been great.

When I got to Charlotte street, I looked up it, to see if there were any signs of old Jerry, but there wasn't a trace of him. Then I noticed a lot of people gathered in front of Poole's barber shop. I went down there and the nearer I came to the place the lower my heart sank. I felt something coming. I pushed into the crowd and there I saw my finish!

"Jerry might be the oldest horse in town, but he'd made a sensation on a grand scale. He had tried to dodge a tree as he came on a slithering, and had made too sudden a twist and gone, kersmash, through Poole's window and into the shop. There was a yell and a panic over what they thought was an explosion, but now the barber, and one customer with lather on his face yet, and some other men, were heaving and sweating and talking loud and trying to get the old horse out. The wagon was turned upside down in the street. There was a big excitement.

“‘Where is Mulcahy?’ everybody was asking and just then Mulcahy came rushing ‘round the corner to learn how old Jerry had run away for the first time in his life.

“‘What th’ blazes iver came over th’ baste?’ asked the poor expressman, and everybody began telling him about it and saying how dangerous it was to leave his horse standing untied on the street, especially on the Fourth of July.

“By this time, you bet, I’d stopped laughing, and I sort of sneaked for home. Bildad was there before me looking a little more battered than usual, but he was all right. I wasn’t.

“We had fireworks, after dinner, and Sandy and I had lots of the fun managing them, with Uncle Fred’s help. That kept my mind busy for some time. I was longer going to sleep than usual, though, that night.

“I laughed every time I thought of

Bildad's fiery career, but when I remembered poor old Jerry and poor old Mulcahy the thing didn't seem quite so funny.

"But three or four days after when I heard that the barber had sued Mulcahy for eleven dollars damages on account of the broken window, then was when I went under.

"No one down town knew I had anything to do with the disaster. Even Bildad's part in the affair had not been taken up. People down on Charlotte street thought Bildad was only running after old Jerry if they noticed him at all.

"I knew I owed that eleven dollars. No one else thought of me as to blame.

"I thought it over and over. I had saved a little more than seven dollars, but it was in the savings bank, and the book was locked up in papa's safe in his office.

"John Peterson told me that Mulcahy

said he could never pay eleven dollars. He didn't have that much and couldn't borrow it, and so, John said, he was in a fix. I heard too, that Mulcahy was trying to sell old Jerry, but no one wanted him, and, even if anyone did buy the horse, I thought, what would the expressman do for a living? He has a big family of youngsters, too. They live down in what we call 'The Patch,' a part of town where the poorest people have their homes.

"But I fell down! There is no use talking about it; I fell down, or at least I came so near it that I'm ashamed to think about it even now. I wanted that seven dollars I had saved up for a special purpose, and, besides, there was the other four to be raised. How could I do that? I flunked. Nobody thought of me in connection with the lawsuit. What had I to do with Poole or with Mulcahy and his old horse, anyway? But that sort of fig-

uring didn't work. Something inside of me kept pulling and, at last, I couldn't stand it. I'd held on for several days, but the day before Mulcahy's case came off before Justice Partridge, I caved in.

"I went to papa and let out the whole thing. The next morning, early, he gave me my bank-book so I could draw out my seven dollars, and he planked down four more for the balance, and you'd better believe I hustled down to Mulcahy's stand on Main street.

"He wasn't there, so I hiked over to the Patch and found him in his Sunday clothes, getting ready to go to the Justice's court.

"His wife was crying and three or four kids were bawling too, from sympathy, I suppose. They were all out in their front yard and their neighbors were hanging over the fence listening to the row, for poor Mulcahy's wife was giving it to him for not tying Jerry when he left him on the Fourth of July.

"I called Mulcahy into the tumble-down shed at the side of the house and it didn't take me long to get his attention when I showed him the eleven dollars. Then I told him about Bildad and how he had scared Jerry—and no wonder—and all the rest.

"Mulcahy was overcome with joy, first, and then he didn't know what was the next step.

"‘What'll I do at all?’ he asked, shoving his best hat way back on his head. ‘Poole has a lawyer, and he's bound to go agin me—’

"I told him, as papa had said, to go straight to Poole, the barber, pay the money, and leave Poole and his lawyer to get out of the suit.

"As I started to leave, Mrs. Mulcahy stopped us, and Mulcahy explained the matter to her in a few words. I wish he hadn't, for quick as a flash, Mrs. Mulcahy turned upon me and began to give

me what she had stored up for her husband. It was pretty hot stuff.

"'Lave the kid alone, can't ye,' said Mulcahy; 'save it f'r th' goat.'

"As we walked away Mulcahy slapped me on the shoulder and said, 'Ye're a foine b'ye,' and then held his head down thinking a minute and added, "'Tis a foine goat too, Oi dunno.'

"And no more secrets in mine, thank you! I've had enough to last a lifetime.

"Papa went over the whole ground with me, later, all about lying and deceiving and concealing the truth when it ought to be known. And he traced the whole thing back to the old enemy, fear. I was ashamed enough, for I had been bragging to myself that I had downed fear, and wasn't afraid of anything. But the thing's got a lot of shapes. Seems as if you no more than knock one of its heads off than up pops another.

"I wasn't afraid of Mulcahy, nor of papa, even, but I was afraid of being found out in my fooling with Bildad and all that came after. It meant no end of talk, and then the boys were sure to guy me.

"But it's all over now, and I shall think twice, I guess, before I tackle anything that may start an earthquake, and as for having something to keep dark lying on my conscience like a heavy dumpling on my stomach, No, no, thank you, not for me.

JAMES LAWSON."

And that is the story of what Jim calls his biggest fall-down. He says he thinks it did him good to write it out, kind o' cleared his system, but he doesn't make any other remarks. After all, he was sorely tempted, being a boy, but he hadn't been as small and mean as I had been with Carrie.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BIT OF ROMANCE.

I wish I had some extra gift at writing, to tell the lovely thing that happened. I had a hand in it, too, and as it is the first bit of romantic affair that I have ever seen of course I am quite excited.

Jim says he wonders how I ever could speak to Uncle Fred of Miss Nesbit after the way our committee "flattened out," but it was my not being afraid to speak that did it. And I was led into it by Uncle Fred himself, this time.

But I must begin at the beginning. It was at the breakfast table at our house that my story started.

"Colonel Nesbit has been appointed Postmaster," said papa, looking up at mamma from over his morning paper. He looked awfully glad, and mamma was delighted at the news.

"It is Mr. Wentworth's work, I am sure," said mamma. "I must call and congratulate Louise."

Uncle Fred looked queer. I noticed him because he shoved back his chair suddenly, and then, after a moment or two, asked to be excused, and left the room.

Mamma looked thoughtfully after him, but she soon returned to the subject of Colonel Nesbit's appointment. It appears that the Colonel has been rather poor ever since his block of stores down town was burned, and somehow, he couldn't get started in business again, so papa said, although the Colonel looks young for his age, and seems able to go on as well as anyone. From their talk now I could see that it was feared that the Colonel had lost heart, a little, but that this appointment would do him good in every way.

"I'm glad of it all," said mamma. "Mrs.

Wentworth was an old school friend of Louise, and when Mr. Wentworth was nominated for Congress a year ago he promised Louise, if he were elected, to try to get her father to be appointed Postmaster here."

"No better man could be found, to be sure," said papa, "and as a nomination by Mr. Wentworth's party means election in this district, and the Postmaster here is practically chosen by the Congressman, it has been only a question of time when the promised appointment should be made. Everyone in Merrivale will rejoice over it."

And now comes the best of my story.

That afternoon Uncle Fred and I went for a long walk. It was getting toward evening when, on our way home, we sat down to rest under the big oak in the edge of the woods, and Uncle Fred spoke, for the first time, of the coming end of his visit to us. In two weeks he

must go, he said, and it was hard to think of being away from us.

He leaned back against the tree, and as he spoke of leaving Merrivale he looked very sad, and he saw me looking sorry, too, I suppose, for he took my two hands in his and said,

"Little girl, you don't know how heavy my heart is, for we've had good times together, haven't we? and I'm leaving all I love best in Merrivale.

At first I thought he meant mamma, Jim and the rest of us, but somehow suddenly it came to me that he was thinking of Miss Louise Nesbit. I was almost afraid to speak but the more I thought the more sorry I got and I became reckless, I guess. I broke out:

"Well, Uncle Fred"—then I almost broke down—"why do you leave her?—I mean Miss Louise—you know—"

"Oh," he answered, "she doesn't care for me. Her heart belongs to someone else."

"Who can it be?" I asked, surprised.
"What makes you think that?"

"I will tell you all about it, Kit," he said, sitting up straight and speaking fast. "It's a strange thing to talk to a little girl about, but I don't care. You're my little playmate. A year ago, you see, I was a happy man. I thought I had found some one who would be a part of me all my life, and though I had not yet spoken all I intended, I did not have much fear of losing Miss Nesbit. I was fool enough to think that she cared for me. A few days before I was to leave Merrivale I walked across the fields to Colonel Nesbit's, determined to ask Louise to be my wife, and to get the Colonel's consent, too. I was very confident and hopeful."

Uncle Fred was still so long that I was afraid he wasn't going on, and at last I ventured to say, "And then?"

"And then," he continued, turning

away his face—"Then the blow came. As I came out through the wood I saw two riders going down the road, and two others were just passing. The ones near me were Miss Nesbit and a gentleman—a good looking, clean-cut man, a little older than myself, perhaps. The two were earnestly talking and took no note of me. I saw Miss Nesbit put out her hand, across from her horse, the man took it, and as her face turned toward him it seemed full of a great joy.

"I did not know what to make of this little scene, and I stood leaning on the fence, thinking it over, not very seriously, though, when back from the way she had gone came Miss Nesbit, with her father. They were cantering easily along, their horses neck and neck.

"When she saw me Miss Nesbit stopped. 'Here is Mr. Rathburne, father,' she said. 'Please lead my horse and I will walk. You were coming to see us,

were you not?' she said, turning to me.

"Colonel Nesbit rode away, leading his daughter's horse by the rein and we were left alone. As I looked at her the words of love died on my lips. My confidence was gone. She was glowing with joy and before I could say anything she spoke.

"I have my heart's desire,' she cried, 'Congratulate me!' She held out her hand.

"I was bewildered. I muttered something about having seen her pass by and then she said, 'Did you see Mr. Wentworth? I have his promise!'

"I was dumfounded. I never had heard of any Mr. Wentworth, but there was no mistaking her tone. Mr. Wentworth was the world to her."

"Uncle Fred! Uncle Fred!" I fairly screamed—"Don't you know who Mr. Wentworth is? and don't you—oh you

stupid, queer, jealous, funny Uncle Fred!" and I broke down, and cried.

"Why child, what do you mean? Don't cry, dearie. I shouldn't bother a little girl with my troubles—but don't cry, and I'll promise not to!"

He was laughing now, but so was I. And then I just told him the foolish mistake he had made, for I knew, now, why he and Miss Louise had been so stiff and cold to each other ever since that day last summer.

"You goose of an Uncle Fred," I said, "Mr. Elbert Wentworth is our member of Congress. That day last summer he and his wife had been over to see Colonel Nesbit. Mr. Wentworth had been nominated for Congress, and had just promised Miss Louise to get the Colonel appointed Postmaster as soon as he could. His wife is Miss Louise's best friend: they were at school together—and—oh, you foolish uncle!"

As little Kansas Joe says, "You ought to saw Uncle Fred!"

He grew as pale as a grave-stone, and was about as quiet as one, for a few minutes. When he spoke his voice was funny.

"Let's go and see your mamma," he said. "I believe you are right, and that I have been making a good deal of a spectacle of myself! Miss Nesbit has met me very coldly, but perhaps that was because of my changed manner to her. I bade her a short good-bye that day, and have spoken to her very formally, since."

We hurried home, and found mamma, and she told Uncle Fred all over again the story of Mr. Wentworth and his friendly help to his wife's school-mate.

"To think that you had never heard of Mr. or Mrs. Wentworth!" she said. "We all forgot that, and of course Louise forgot that you were really a stranger here,

for you were with us so much. Why, we have talked it all over, the prospects of Colonel Nesbit, and Mr. Wentworth's hope of assisting him, and I don't see how you escaped hearing it. What must Louise have thought of you?"

"I'm going to see!" said Uncle Fred; and he took up his hat and went striding away 'cross lots to Colonel Nesbit's.

And it came out all right. Louise has forgiven Uncle Fred, I'm certain, from the way they both act, and I am sure they are the happiest couple, as well as the handsomest, that ever existed.

When I told Jim he only said, quite pompously, "The committee is discharged," and then he turned a hand-spring.

It is too bad we can't tell the Lanes and Duncans, but mamma says that it is perhaps in better taste to say nothing about Uncle Fred's love story; so Jim and I know a regular grown-up secret,

and that helps to pay for not telling the others of our age. You see that isn't being deceitful, or even secretive. It's only something quite in the family.

CHAPTER XIV.

PAIN.

One night last week I heard noises in Jim's room, which is next to mine. I could hear him tossing about and muttering but I thought that maybe he was only talking in his sleep, as he does sometimes, and so closed my own eyes again and heard nothing more until I awakened in the morning. Then there was no mistaking that Jim was in trouble of some kind. I heard him walking about, though it was early, and I heard him say "Golly" in a tone of voice which didn't seem comfortable. I dressed myself as quickly as I could and knocked at his door.

He called to me to come in and as I looked at him I cried out in spite of myself. One part of his face, low down,

was swelled out in a big lump, his eyes were red and he was walking up and down the room with one hand against the swelled place and looking awfully dismal.

"What in the world is the matter, Jim?" I cried out.

The poor boy tried to laugh and be brave, but couldn't do it very well.

"I don't know, Kit. I've got the 'big head' I guess, but I don't feel proud, even if I am kind o' puffed up. I haven't been to sleep since eleven o'clock and it keeps getting worse all the time. Golly!" and he began walking up and down again.

I was awfully sorry for him. He had complained the day before that one of his teeth hurt him and there was some swelling, but not much, and it seemed hardly possible that such a change could have come so soon. We hurried downstairs and Jim went outdoors and walked

about until breakfast time. When he came into the dining-room he was a sad looking object.

Papa and mamma looked at Jim's face and asked him all about it and then papa told him that he must go to the dentist as soon as breakfast was over, Uncle Fred promising to go along, to "see him through" he said. Poor Jim couldn't eat and he couldn't talk much, either, though he tried to, once in a while.

"Do you think the New Thought can help toothache?" he asked.

"Yes, certainly," said papa. "You can help the toothache by seeing yourself as you really are, and thinking of it. The body which feels the pain is but the servant of the mind and reflects the mind in everything.

"But I didn't think 'toothache' before it began," said Jim.

"No, but it might come from some thought, just the same. The condition

of the blood or of the whole body might have been affected by some action of your mind. Have you never known people to be sick after a sudden shock? Have you never heard or read of people who have died suddenly of what, for convenience, is called heart disease, after they have given way to some violent exhibition of passion?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well that was the effect of the condition of mind upon the body. The condition of your body or part of it this morning may be the reflection of something you or some one before you thought: but we will deal with it as it is to your sense of it just now:—Every nerve cell in the body is a little brain, or a telephone, and it will receive and retain the mental impression given it. The first thing to do is to send the tooth a message and a healing one at that; the next thing will be a visit to the dentist, for

we are not yet where we can do without help from the people who are fitted to put in good order different parts of the instrument we are working with; though it should be possible to do it all by our own thinking. We have been for generations educated to think certain conditions bound to come upon us, and we will have to do a power of un-thinking to keep things straight. Meanwhile, if a tooth needs a dentist's attention or a broken bone needs setting, good sense will take us to the dentist or the surgeon. This we can do to keep the sensation of pain out of the part, and we make the healing speedy, by strong affirmations, and a positive refusal to recognize a condition not in accordance with the God-like nature of our real, true being."

"Wouldn't it be fine if we didn't have any nerves at all?" said Jim. "Then we

wouldn't feel any pain in our bodies and everything would be all right."

Papa looked amused: "I'm afraid everything would be all wrong, my boy. What would you say if I told you that without nerves and what we call pain we couldn't be safe a minute, that bodily pain is for the protection of our bodies, and so, for our good?"

"I don't see how pain is for our good, unless maybe, that it teaches a fellow how to grin and bear things!"

"No, it isn't for that. I'll make it plain to you in a physical way. A nerve, you may bear in mind, is one of a host of little white threads, reaching from the brain to all parts of the body. Then think of each one of these threads as a telegraph wire. When anything is wrong anywhere in the body the nerve reaching to the part that is in trouble carries a message to the brain at once and then from the message we call pain, we know

what we have got to attend to at once."

"But supposing the brain didn't get any such telegraph message; what would happen then?"

"Well, suppose you were to put your hand, accidentally, into a kettle of boiling hot water. Of course, since your nerves were not sending word of what was going on, you might let your hand stay there. What would happen then?"

"I suppose my hand would be boiled away."

"Exactly. And if you hadn't got a message over the nerve telling of the condition of your face this morning something serious would have occurred. So you see how pain is for our good. Of course the nerves carry welcome messages, too. They bring word to the brain when something tastes good in the mouth, when the nostrils have inhaled a fragrance, when the eye has looked upon a pleasant sight, or has

read good news, or when the ear has received a welcome message, or heard a pleasant sound. The nerves carry messages the other way, too; messages from the brain telling any part of the body what to do. You see that without nerves we would not suffer, but would be paralyzed and as if dead."

"I guess I'll get along with nerves, after all," was Jim's remark. "Anyway, I'll send as strong a thought as I can to that tooth, now, and try to hang on to it until the dentist gets through with me. I expect it will be pretty tough. Come along, Uncle Fred," and off they went.

They were away hardly a half an hour and when they came back Jim was smiling. "He stood it well," Uncle Fred told us, "while the dentist lanced his swollen jaw and cleaned and then filled the tooth with something healing." It didn't hurt half as much as he expected, Jim said,

and now he proposed to try to think it was all over with.

"That's the proper way to treat it," papa answered; "Just let it go. What we call complete relaxation is the wisest thing. Resolve that you won't keep 'strung up' over it and pretty soon you'll find you've nothing to be 'strung up' about."

"I think that sometimes the dumb animals, especially the most splendid of them all, the dogs, set us a fine example in the treatment of pain. You know I was born in a part of the country where it was new, and extremely wild. In the woods were plenty of porcupines, harmless little animals, but unpleasant customers for dogs to assail. Let a dog but sieze one of them and the easily loosened barbed quills would come off in his mouth and begin to work their way into the flesh. There was but one way to treat a dog thus unfortunate, and that

was to pull the quills out as quickly as possible.

"We had a dog named Pero, a great hunter on his own account, and very intelligent, but not quite intelligent enough, when excited, to let hedgehogs alone, though he had been through many painful experiences and suffered much in having the quills extracted. He would still, on his hunting excursions, attack hedgehogs, but, the moment he felt the painful and dangerous things in his mouth, he would start on a run for home and hunt up father.

"Then father, with the bullet-moulds for pincers, would take Pero's head between his knees and pull out the quills, one by one, and the brave dog would never whimper though the pain must have been very great from having the flesh torn in such a sensitive place. As soon as the operation was over, Pero, evidently feeling ill, would start for the

barn and there would lie down, not moving for hours, just "relaxing," it seemed, until, at last, he would suddenly jump up as well as ever. Could he have possibly acted with greater courage and wisdom?"

"My own ache is about gone, now," Jim broke in, "and since it's over with, I'm rather glad I had it. It makes me enjoy not having an ache, and I didn't do that before."

"Pain or trial of any sort, whether it be of the body or the mind, certainly does make us appreciate the host of blessings we have," papa answered. "The one who has lost his sight and had it restored, or the one who has emerged from a long captivity in prison, knows better than another the glory and great gift of the sun and sky and all that is fair to us in nature, and so suffering induces gratitude for whatever blessings we may possess. And in gratitude is much

happiness. The grateful are rarely the miserable, though what they are grateful for may seem to others insignificant."

Here Uncle Fred spoke, laughing: "I know a case, Robert, which is a remarkable illustration of the truth of what you are saying. It is a droll one, though it is pitiful in a way. I'm acquainted with an old veteran in the Soldiers' Home. I called upon him a few months ago, to see how he was getting on. I found him, among a group of comrades, by all odds the most twisted, crippled, old-looking and worst in appearance of the lot. At the same time, he was certainly as cheerful and contented as any man among them. It was something wonderful! I asked him if he was satisfied with things?

"'Satisfied?' Of course I am,' mumbled the old fellow heartily. 'I'm a little twisted up, and a little clumsy, with my one leg, but that's nothing. This is a

good place and these are good fellows. Fact is,' he went on innocently, 'I always was the luckiest man alive! Why, my teeth are all out except two old snags, but what do you think! One's in my upper and one's in my lower jaw and they're exactly opposite above and below, so's I can chew. Wouldn't 'a happened to one man in a thousand! I'm naturally lucky about everything.'

"Bless his old heart! What he innocently called his 'luck' was nothing but his own natural outpouring of good will toward everybody and his tendency to make the best of things. He's leading a happy life because his thoughts are right, and there are kings and millionaires who could learn from him. He doesn't need their sympathy. He's richer than they are."

"That's a striking illustration, Fred," said papa, "and that word 'sympathy' you just used suggests an addition to

what I've been saying to Jim and Kit here. I believe suffering of any sort makes us far more sympathetic, where others are concerned. The many who have lost those dearest to them know what others so afflicted endure, and if possessed of any heart at all, want to stretch out their arms and help them. It is so with the grave things in life and so even with the lesser ones. The man unfortunate in business, the one with a broken leg, the child who has lost a toy, each is made likely to feel more for another in the same condition; and to be sympathetic and hopeful is to make strength for ourselves here and provision for what there is to come.

"You've had to hear a lot about pain, besides starting out as a shocking example with your toothache this morning. How do you like it, Jim?" and papa laughed.

"Well," answered Jim, quite thought-

fully, for him, "I believe I've got some pointers, and, as for that toothache, its gone glimmering. I'm ahead, after all, I guess."

Jim uses what sounds a good deal like slang and I'm afraid I'm beginning to understand it. I told him that I had learned a good deal from all we had heard about suffering, and that I wouldn't be so afraid of it any more. "Your toothache did me good," I said.

"That's all right, Kit," answered Jim, laughing and twisting his face, "I'm glad it did you good—but James—James—he paid the freight!"

Which was more of Jim's slang. He'll get over it, mamma says.

CHAPTER XV.

A DAY IN FEBRUARY.

It is away into winter now—the 23rd of February—and the wind is shrieking and whistling around the corners of the eaves, and the air is full of snow, now in the middle of the afternoon. Everything is as cold and hard and icy as it can be. Once in a while there is a little rent in the gray sky above and then the sun comes out and shines glitteringly on the tops of the fence posts, and on the ice ridges which show up once in a while on the bare clay made by the wagon tracks in the street, and then—with all that whistling, threatening wind—it seems colder than ever. Yet, I am a contented and happy girl in the midst of it all. It is odd, but it is true, once, such a day as this, with the wind whist-

ling and the icicles sticking down beyond the tops of the top windows seemed to me the dreariest thing in the world; the hardest and meanest.

But on the tall, waving, reed-like things in the front yard, and especially on some of the great weeds in the vacant lot, there has just come sweeping in and settling a great flock of snow buntings. We know the names of the winter birds, now, Jim and I, after all Uncle Fred has taught us. We have studied hard, and looked sharp, and run around everywhere, and read a book or two Uncle Fred gave us—to try to find out about every bird that comes here, and that gives a new interest in the life of the whole world, for us.

And there are a thousand other things. Jim and I don't seem like the same boy and girl. It is hard for me to understand it, and yet I do understand it, too.

When school opened last September I

was surprised to find how new everything looked to me in the new light which had been poured into my own mind during the summer vacation.

Girls and boys who before seemed dull or silly now interest me. I am all the time looking for the good in them, expecting it, and always finding more than I looked for. When I came back to school I remembered my lesson about foolish vanity, and didn't let any girl's clothes make any difference in my liking for her.

I get along pretty well with Miss Fitzroy, my teacher, though she always seems to succeed in "rubbing everybody's fur the wrong way," as Jim says. I learn some of my lessons and recite them, by just driving myself; others are easier, though, and I hope I shall pass my examination all right next June, though I am very slow in some studies, and one glance of scorn from Miss Fitz-

roy's eye is enough to congeal my very blood, to say nothing of my brain, that won't work until Miss Fitzroy looks the other way.

Papa says I must learn to concentrate my mind upon what I am doing, and get so that I am not easily influenced by the actions or thoughts of others, when I am attending to my work. He says, "So long as you are in your place, and doing your best at your task, whatever it may be, you are all right, and you need not seek the approbation, or fear the disapproval of anyone."

So I am learning a lesson not in the course of study, from my teacher, and she doesn't know it. Sometime, when I am grown up, I may love Miss Fitzroy.

This world certainly is a beautiful place, full of kindness and thoughtfulness, and I shall never be one to complain or be disappointed.

When I get vexed at anyone I try to

think, at once, that God is in that very person I am angry with, and this helps me to behave myself. I often fail in my attempts to live in accordance with the inner "light which lighteth" everyone, but mamma and papa always encourage me and help me to keep on trying.

It was lonely, at first, when Aunt Flo went away. We all missed her, and then it seemed so quiet without Joe and Carrie. So I had all I could do to keep mamma cheered and jolly the first day or two, and papa has promised that mamma shall take Jim and me to visit Aunt Flo next Summer. Carrie is the very dearest girl I know, and Jim is the very jolliest brother that any girl could have, and as for mamma and papa—well, they are "tip top." Jim and I agree on that as on many other things.

My dolls, I have at last put away for good. The day before Cousin Carrie left, she and I dressed Maybelle and Lucretia

Mott in their very best, and then we put them in Mamma's big packing trunk that smells of camphor and stands in our garret.

It was not without a pang that I gave them up, but I am getting along in years. I was twelve my last birthday. At Christmas, when we had a lot of children visiting us, I got the dolls out for them, and they enjoyed playing with them as much as ever I did.

The Slann boys go to the same school as Jim and I, but they are in a lower room. They say Viggo is very clever and quick to learn. Jim says he is sure Viggo will catch up with him this year, and he tries all he can to help him. The younger boy, Max, isn't so bright as Viggo, but he just tags along as usual.

The Duncans and Lanes are as jolly as ever. We have good times together, and Johannesburg Pietersburg is going on well at school. He wants to be a

soldier, but Johnny Lane is going to be a lawyer, or minister, or something that talks, anyway.

Jim hasn't decided what he will be. "President of a railroad, or any old thing will do,"—he says.

Papa says it doesn't matter so much about our occupations or what we do, as what we are. Once he quoted from a man named Ralph Waldo Emerson. The quotation ran something like this: "What you are speaks so loud I can't hear what you say."

I have a glimmering of what that means. I think of it sometimes when someone is talking a good deal,—some one not so very wise.

It is a queer way to say what I want to say but I feel a great deal both younger and older than I was a year ago.

I feel younger because I know Jim better, and the Slann boys better, and the coons and all wild creatures, better,

and everything seems fresher in a way that I do not know just how to explain.

I feel older, because somehow during these months I have come closer to my father and mother and Uncle Fred and to the realities that affect them and all of us, and our relations with God.

But above all I got closer to Jim. It seems to me that Jim, my brother,—and frequently I think that I am smarter than he is—it seems to me that my brother Jim is teaching me perhaps more than I have learned from anyone or anything else. I guess it's because a girl at my age and Jim's knows more than a boy, but a boy doesn't try to show off so much.

Anyhow, because of what papa and mamma have taught us, Jim and I see everything shinier as we look ahead—and I think that I will be—anyway I hope that I will be,—a good woman and I know Jim will be a good man. And it

all seems wonderful and better and I know that we are more all right, anyhow.

The world is a beautiful place to me since I have learned that God is in all and is a part of everything. I do not fear what is coming as I grow older. God will take care of me and all I have to do is to be sure I am his own child and a part of Him all the time.

Mamma says the love she and papa have for Jim and me is only a little part of God's love showing out plain so there is no mistaking it.

Jim says the sample we have every day is surely the genuine thing, and I agree with him. I like to think that all the goodness I see at home, at school and everywhere is but God's love shining out in one way or another. I am going to try to be one of those through whom God works, even if in but a small,

unnoticed way. And in it all I am a very happy girl, for I know that "God is Love."

THE END.

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